themes of theology

A MISSION THEOLOGY

by

a. m. henry, o.p.

$3.95

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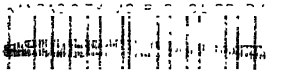
by A. M. Henry, O.P.

For Christians in the Western world, "missionary" activity once meant bringing the Gospel to pagans in foreign lands—a remote, temporary function in the Church which would cease when those lands became civilized and Christian. Today, with the world rapidly becoming one and unbelief flourishing everywhere, this view of the matter is no longer adequate.

There are still "foreign" missions, but there are also territories, parishes, and peoples within "Christian" countries where missionary activity is needed. Experience has taught the Church that it cannot claim its territory geographically or statistically, but only inwardly: unbelief, not pagan countries or unbaptized multitudes, is the challenge facing missionary activity, and it is one found at all times and in all places. We know now that the missionary function is a permanent one in the life of the Church. Father Henry's study aims at outlining the norms and laws for missionary activity.

He begins by defining the three states in the Church's action—mission, catechesis, and pastorate—and describes the communities within which these activities function —the baptismal, catechetical, and eucharistic communities. The missionary sets off this chain of action by announcing the "good news" of salvation to unbelievers. Through his testimony to the Word, and the action of the Spirit, hearts are converted and the Church is planted, or replanted, in the world. Conversion is accompanied by signs, sometimes miraculous ones, and leads necessarily to the Cross, e.g., the desire for martyrdom, for suffering for Christ. Conversion is an interior phenomenon, never fully ascertainable by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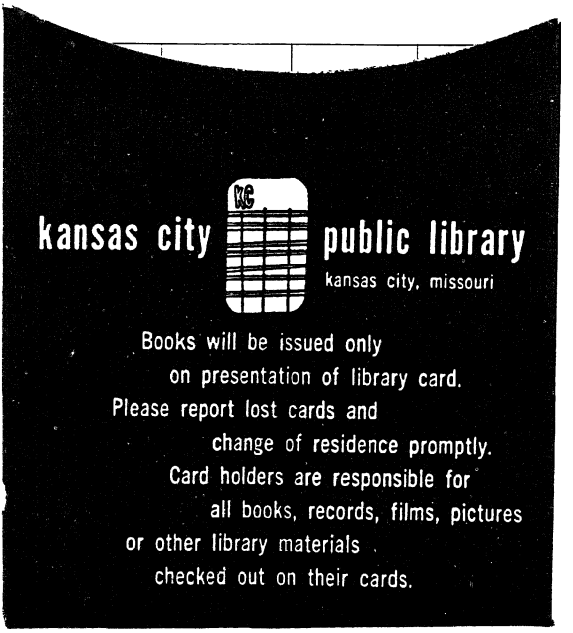
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AUG 1964

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A. M. HENRY, O.P.

Translated by

ALBERT J. LAMOTHE, JR.

FIDES PUBLISHERS, INC.

Notre Dame Indiana

Copyright: 1962, Fides Publishers, Inc.
Notre Dame, Ind.

Nihil Obstat: Louis J. Putz, C.S.C.
University of Notre Dame

Imprimatur: Leo A. Pursley, D.D.
Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 63-12299

Published originally in France, in 1959, by Les Éditions du Cerf, 29 Boulevard de Latour-Marbourg, Paris, under the title *Esquisse d'une Théologie de la Mission,* in the series "Parole et Mission."

Books in the Themes of Theology Series:

God Speaks
God Among Men
The Theology of Sin
The Theology of Sex in Marriage
A Mission Theology

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One

THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD TODAY

Two major facts today urgently demand the development of a mission theology: on the one hand, there is the prodigious increase of unbelief in the world, and, on the other, the seeming lack of credit attached, in this same world, to the Word of truth which is our salvation. These facts deserve our reflection. They should force us to become more precisely and more lucidly aware of the Church's proper mission and to weigh accurately all our forces—not merely our numerical strength, but also, and especially, the force of our arguments in a world that no longer is satisfied with words.

The first fact is that unbelief is making considerable numerical progress in the world. We are all sufficiently informed on this subject by the press, so that it is not necessary to dwell on it at length. Let us simply recall that 91 per cent of all Catholics are found in Europe and in the new Europe constituted by North and South America. The continents of Asia, Africa, the ocean islands, where the vast majority of people (about 70 per cent) live, have barely 10 per cent of all Catholics. But the peoples of the Asiatic continent are very prolific and the extraordinary growth of their populations[1] compared with the increase of Christian peoples as a whole, is greatly and alarmingly raising the proportion of un-

[1] To mention just one figure, China, which today numbers 600 million inhabitants, each year adds 18 million more, despite the already exploded policy of birth control, and this rate of growth tends to increase as the over-all population figure increases.

believers with respect to Christians. The latter are, more and more, as far as relative numbers go, the little flock. Yet missionaries have not failed to go into practically every nation to bring the Word of salvation.

White Africa was evangelized from the first century. Alexandria, Carthage, Hippo, were great episcopal sees, and some of their bishops, such as Athanasius, Cyprian, and Augustine, hold a select place in the ancient and even the modern history of the Church. Ethiopia was evangelized in the second or third century. Why is it that the Word of the Gospel never spread beyond the Abyssinian frontiers? Or, if there were some obscure missionaries from this ancient time who penetrated deeply into Black Africa, what obstacles did they encounter? Why did the Church not become solidly implanted there?

As for Asia, it was the very first scene of Christian expansion, since the evangelical seed was first sown throughout Palestine, Syria, Anatolia, later in Arabia, Persia, and Armenia. It is possible that the Apostle St. Thomas evangelized India, as we are assured by a tradition which is too venerable to be contradicted. At any rate, Nestorian bishoprics spread over the entire continent of Asia, including Viet Nam, Indonesia, and China, during the seventh and eighth centuries. How is it that all this apostolic work has apparently gone for nothing?

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Franciscan and Dominican missionaries, following in the steps of the Venetian Marco Polo, expended considerable effort in re-evangelizing Asia. Then everything foundered once more until the Portuguese, whose *Padroado* or "patronate" included the privilege of carrying on missionary activities in that immense continent, recommended the

evangelization process. And today, after so many martyrs, so much generous activity, and so much devotion, the Word of God apparently is running into a stone wall. Some three million Catholics in China—what is this number in comparison with the present 600 million Chinese?

Some will say, perhaps, that these souls are rebelling against the Word and that Christians bear no responsibility for that. Do Christians have the right to pronounce such a judgment? Is it possible for an entire people to rebel against the Word? Let us reflect on what this means. That a person can rebel out of personal malice is a possibility which is but the obverse side of his innate freedom. But that an entire people should do the same seems to mean that there are obstacles other than fundamental malice universally distributed and attributable to each person's personal freedom alone; that there are obstacles of a social, cultural, and linguistic, or political, nature. But we know that, in Christ, there is no longer a chosen nation, no privileged race or people—St. Paul says that there is neither Greek, nor Jew, nor slave, nor freedman, nor male, nor female (Gal. 3:28)—and we also believe that there are no damned races or peoples, that salvation extends to all. "God wishes all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4).

There is, then, an important distinction to be made between the obstacle created by each man's malice and bad will and the "obstacle" of the sociological, ethnological, and cultural determination of his psychology. Obstacles of the latter kind are never more than external determinations, in the sense that they do not press down

fatally upon the choice which each man who comes into this world must make in the face of the true and the false, good and evil, the divine call and the solicitations of Satan. If a man prefers the darkness to the light, it is always because "his works were evil" (John 3:19). While it is true that "everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, that his deeds may not be exposed," it is equally true—our Master says this too— that "he who does the truth comes to the light that his deeds may be made manifest, for they have been performed in God" (John 3:20-21). This divine rule apparently holds for everyone. God is not a respecter of persons (Rom. 2:11; Eph. 6:9; Col. 3:25; 1 Pet. 1:17).

Indeed we see that during its early history Christianity was not stopped in its expansion by any of the obstacles which today seem to be delaying indefinitely the effectiveness of the Word of salvation. For centuries, Christianity was implanted in Palestine, in Egypt, in Cyrenaica, in Ifriqua—which nowadays we refer to as North Africa—in Syria, in Anatolia, Armenia, Georgia, Persia, in Greece, and especially in Rome.

What was the source of this expansive drive? Did it merely correspond to a special "grace" at this time of Christianity's youth or were there other causes for it? It is difficult to invoke political support during the era of the persecutions. But it is not without interest to recognize that the political factors which, especially beginning in the fourth century, often played an important role, more than once compromised the missionary activity of the Church. For instance, it would seem that when Constantine made peace with the Church and signed an

accord with her, this brought the Church immense advantages: the persecutions ceased, the pagan deities were dethroned, the ancient religious institutions were suppressed or became unfashionable. Still, out on the frontiers of the Empire, in a country like Persia which had always fought heroically against the Empire, the Christians were, from that time on, considered as auxiliaries of the Empire and persecuted primarily for that reason. Christian expansion apparently stopped in that nation. Despite all the good which the conversion of Constantine and the Edict of Milan brought to the Christian faith, it may be said that the era of misunderstanding and confusion dates from that time.[2]

There were dramatic equivocations, later still, in the Japanese policy of persecution in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Here there were conflicts of in-

[2] The misunderstandings with regard to Persia and Armenia, and also Viet Nam, China, etc., are set forth by C. Couturier, *Mission de l'Église,* Paris, Ed. de l'Orante, 1957, pp. 86 ff. Misunderstandings, however, do not stop there. Similar examples could be multiplied. Thus, there has been ample demonstration of the nature of the anticolonial and anti-Roman resistance of the Donatist movement, the aspect of anti-Hellenic resistance in the Monophysite movement of Egypt, and in the Jacobitism of Syria. Some sixty years ago, Pisany (*A travers l'Orient,* Paris, Bloud et Barral, 1897) wrote that Monophysitism was hardly anything but a symbol of nationalist resistance: "It was a form of hatred which the Copts felt for the dominant Greek spirit." As for the Jacobite Christians of Syria, they were so unsympathetic to the rule of the Basileus of Constantinople, that they welcomed the armies of Islam as liberators. "The God of vengeance," wrote Michael the Syrian, Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch, "brought the sons of Ismael from the region of the south to deliver us through them from the hands of the Greeks. . . . It was no small advantage for us to be liberated from the hand of the Romans [read the Byzantines], from their wickedness, their wrath, their cruel zeal against us, and to find ourselves in peace." (*Chron.*, ed. and trans. by J. B. Chabot, vol. I, p. 417). It would be difficult to believe that the Jacobite heresy did not find important motivation and support in this opposition.

terest between Catholic Portuguese and Protestant Dutch on the one hand, and, on the other, Japanese fears of being dominated by Westerners. There were mistakes too in Spain's policies of Christian expansion in the West Indies. However, let us be clear. We do not intend to say that the martyrs in those countries were not real martyrs of the faith. All those whom we acknowledge as such were unquestionably martyrs. Their intentions are sufficiently clear and explicit. Nor are we saying that the governments which persecuted these Christians were completely in error and opposed to Christianity when, in fact, they were often opposed only to certain political actions. These governments sometimes did act out of hatred for the true faith, but their hatred was quite frequently accompanied by, and sometimes inspired by, political motives; they either discovered that the Christians were potential adversaries or were allied with their enemies, or they were led to believe this.

Interference by the political power in missionary activity often had the result not of simply halting the expansion of the faith, but of impeding the growth of native Churches[3] in different cultures—this in itself, however, being a certain kind of obstacle to the expansion of the faith. In the fourth century there already existed in the bosom of the one Church, a Church of Aramaic culture and tradition, as well as a Syriac Church, a Coptic Church, a Greek Church, and Latin Churches such as those of North Africa, Rome, Milan, Lyons. Today, the Church is for the most part, and almost everywhere on earth, Latin. The non-Latin

[3] We use the word in the sense in which the Apostles used it in the New Testament (cf. Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 1:2; 7:17, etc.; Apoc. 1:4, etc.)

Churches within the Catholic Church are, as a matter of fact, of small consequence, and, in the majority of cases, the extension of the Church coincides with the extension of the Latin culture and rite.

This de facto inability of the Church to become indigenous seems to hold not only with regard to nations and territories, but also with regard to certain social environments. Thus, in France, the working class, despite the apostolic efforts of the last twenty-five or thirty years, remains for the most part a sort of foreign land where the Church does not seem to have penetrated and where the few Christians who belong to it appear as strangers to their own class. This is what the shocking book by Abbé Godin, so generally misunderstood, revealed some fifteen years ago. It did not mean that France had lost the faith, or that it had become a mission land, but rather that a whole category of French citizens, distributed throughout the country, constituted a France that was foreign to the Church and a "mission country" where missionaries had as yet only barely ventured. The title of another work in the collection in which Abbé Godin had his own book published, *Ville marxiste, terre de mission* (Marxist City, Mission Land),[4] does away with all equivocation, but, at least as regards the point which concerns us, to the detriment of its general meaning. The "mission land" is not only where a municipality and a government have entirely fallen into Marxist hands, but wherever men identify themselves with the network of forces which, in France, is created by the working class, regardless of the munic-

[4] By Madeleine Delbrel.

ipal framework in which the members of this class function, and irrespective of the geographical location of this "country," which is primarily a sociological reality.[5]

Moreover, it is not only the working class which, in France, is after a fashion a "mission land" and remains so despite much magnificent effort. Father Suavet[6] has pointed out, with a good deal of argument and examples, how the world of the technicians, taken as the whole, and in its technical specialization as such, was estranged from the Church and how much effort in comprehending and adapting was required of the priest in order to penetrate it.

And so we return to our point of departure. How can we bring the Word to the modern world so that this Word will be effectively understood everywhere? Can we propose certain "laws" of missionary preaching? Grace, of course, is always gratuitous and it would be impossible to impose or admit any laws with regard to it. This is true. But it is also true that grace operates in our own actions and that, therefore, God does not save us without ourselves. "Let us take care not to confuse grace and fatalism, gift and passivity, activity

[5] At the end of a sociological analysis, an author recently wrote that, at least as far as France is concerned, "the Church is *implanted* in the bourgeois world as she is not in the working-class world—she appears to the latter as a stranger. It is not therefore a matter of wanting immediately to convert all the workers—which, moreover, is humanly impossible—but it is necessary to *plant the Church* [the author's own emphasis] in the worker's world, it is necessary to make her present and, so to speak, native." (R. d'Izarny, *L'Église et la ville,* coll. *Mission et Sociologie,* 4, rue des Prêtres Saint-Séverin, Paris, pp. 6-61).

[6] *Construire aujourd'hui l'Église,* Paris, Ed. ouvr., 1957.

of God and miracle. . . ."[7] We cannot perform an act of charity without grace, yet we are commanded to love. This is, in fact, the only commandment. We cannot save men by ourselves; their salvation is the work of God. Yet we are commanded to preach: "How are they to believe him whom they have not heard? And how are they to hear, if no one preaches?" (Rom. 10:14). If there are human actions lending themselves to God's salvific activity, there are norms and laws determining such actions.

Defining these laws is the whole objective of a mission theology. What follows will be a sketch of that theology.

[7] P. A. Liégé, "Le combat moderne du croyant," in *Nouvelle Revue Théologique,* Nov. 1957, pp. 897-904, pp. 897-898.

Two

ECCLESIAL ACTION: MISSION, CATECHESIS, PASTORATE

First of all, to whom is missionary activity directed? What does it consist of?

The *mission,* in the strict sense, is directed to unbelievers, and has as its immediate goal bringing them to the conversion of faith. It must therefore be clearly distinguished from *catechesis,* which is directed to the converted and has as its purpose to transmit to them the *rudimenta fidei,* the fundamentals of the faith, in order to dispose them and prepare them for Baptism. At that time it will be ascertained whether they have been fully converted to the faith of the Church when they are asked to "render" the symbol (this is the *redditio symboli*), that is, to profess the Catholic faith. The "symbol," we know, was formerly a sort of password which indicated as being truly Christian whoever was able to give it when asked. As far as the *pastorate* is concerned, this is the ultimate stage in Christian formation, or rather, it is never completed. It is directed to the baptized, or the initiated, and its goal is to lead them to the fullness of the time of Christ which is only attained in heaven, in the communion of His charity. Sunday instructions, homilies, preparation for the sacraments (except Baptism) and administration of the same sacraments, exhortations, education, and governing of the faithful, theological instruction, are some of the pastoral works.

The action of the Church is therefore divided, accord-

ing to the stages of a movement which should normally be continuous, into mission, catechesis, pastorate. These three stages are established in accordance with the practice of the Apostles and of the New Testament, as well as according to the tradition of the Church. The missionary reawakening in this middle of the twentieth century makes us particularly attentive to this threefold action; through reflection on it we have rediscovered the "missionary" riches of the apostolic discourses of the book of the Acts of the Apostles.[1]

But while the realities of these stages are evident, some of the words by which we designate them suffer from a certain ambiguity. So it is with the word *mission* itself. In the sense in which we have spoken above, mission covers only a portion of the Church's work—that directed to unbelievers to announce to them the Good News of salvation and to convert them to faith in Jesus Christ. But, in another sense, the mission of the Church is coextensive with all her activities. It is her "mission," indeed, not only to convert the unbelievers, but also to instruct and catechize the converts, to baptize them, and to watch over God's flock. To designate the mission in its restricted sense, some people prefer therefore to speak of *evangelization* or *kerygma.*

Evangelization is, then, the action which consists of announcing the Good News of salvation; in this proper sense, it is accordingly the "converting" action, the first stage of the Church's action. As for the word *kerygma,* this is simply a transliteration of the Greek word κήρυγμα,

[1] Cf. A. Rétif, *Foi au Christ et mission,* Paris, Ed. du Cerf, 1953, who studies the different *kerygmas,* that is, the different missionary announcements of the Apostles in the Acts.

which designates the message announced by a herald. The Apostle is the herald of God, sent by Jesus Christ, to announce the message of salvation. "It pleased God," says St. Paul, "by the foolishness of our preaching [the preaching of Christ crucified], to save those who believe," (1 Cor. 1:21). "My speech and my preaching," he says further on, "were not in the persuasive words of wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith might rest, not on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God" (1 Cor. 2:4-5). Paul's entire vocation consists in bearing this kerygma *to the pagans:* "The Lord stood by me and strengthened me, that through me the preaching of the gospel might be completed, and that all the Gentiles might hear . . ." (2 Tim. 4:17).

He who brings the kergyma is the *kerux,* κῆρυξ, the king's herald. St. Paul is conscious of being this herald (1 Tim., 2:7); his own action consists of announcing the message for which he has been sent. He expresses this action by the verb κηρύσσειν, which occurs frequently in the New Testament. Everything, therefore, which revolves etymologically around this verb, belongs to the specific missionary vocabulary of the New Testament. It is legitimate to use this term in theology and to speak of kerygma, kerygmatic action, or kerygmatic preaching. These words indicate the first action of the Church with regard to those who have never heard the Gospel.

Whatever may be said about these terms, however, we will retain "mission" in its restricted, specific sense, not in its larger meaning. Missionary activity, as far as we are concerned, will be the equivalent of evangelization and kerygmatic action. The missionary is he who

announces the Good News of salvation in the face of unbelief.

The ambiguity which affects the word "mission" also touches "pastorate." We have spoken of the pastorate in its restricted sense, in which it designates the action of the Church with respect to the baptized, either to instruct them, to govern them, to dispense the sacraments to them, or to exhort and lead them to the perfect unity of the Body of Christ. But the role of the pastor knows no limits. Christ, in His parables, presents Himself to us as a vigilant Shepherd who goes in search of the sheep that stray or that are not of His flock. This is how those other shepherds, His ministers, must be.

And so while it is true that a pastor cannot help being a missionary and a catechist also, when the task requires it, it is equally true that all these tasks are different, so that it is legitimate to distinguish between action which prepares for conversion, action which prepares for Baptism, and action which helps the sheep who have already entered the fold through the Door which is Christ (John 10:7-9). For this reason, we will not use the word "pastor" in the restricted sense of one whose only job is to watch over the flock of the baptized from which no sheep should stray. However, to avoid an unnecessary neologism, we will use the word "pastorate" in this restrictive sense, which is how it is ordinarily accepted nowadays, of special Church action *with regard to the baptized.* This action, let us remember, is unlimited, at least as far as its term is concerned, because it knows no end other than the Kingdom of God to which no Christian community and no just man fully attains

before the coming of Christ. Still, it does have a beginning and this is defined by faith and Baptism.

Ecclesial actions

With these terms defined, we can study more deeply the questions which result from the division of the Church's action. First, what does it mean to label missionary action, catechetical action, and pastoral action, as "churchly" or ecclesial actions? Obviously, it does not mean that no evangelizing act, for instance, can ever be attributed to an individual missionary, at least in some degree. But it does signify that, on the one hand, the missionary cannot be considered in isolation from the Church which sends him and to which he is accredited, and that, on the other hand, the Word of God is not destined solely to be carried to this or that man who seems best disposed to receive it, but must be proclaimed publicly, officially, before every nation, every society, and even throughout the whole earth; the role of the Word is to extend the Church by communicating life wherever this Word is "received," that is, believed. The Church's function is precisely to make the Word unfailingly present, living, and audible to all, without fear or favor.

Second, how are we to distinguish concretely the stages of mission, catechesis, and pastorate, as we have defined them theoretically, according to their goals? Will the missionary phase, for example, be terminated when the catechetical phase begins, or will it be present under a new form in catechesis? Will the missionary and catechetical phases appear in pastoral action among

the faithful? At what times, on what occasions, in what manner? Conversely, do catechesis and pastorate always have an absolute beginning, determined by conversion and Baptism respectively? Does not missionary action sometimes have to include catechetical instruction, even before conversion? And is catechetical instruction always fixed within the framework of the articles of faith to be transmitted and explained?

These last questions would not have the same meaning or scope if the missionary, catechetical, and pastoral phases were only addressed to individuals as such. It would matter little then whether there was an overflow of one activity into the other, or if one anticipated the other. This is not the case however, in communal and ecclesial action, in which the faithful, converts, and, perhaps, from the outset, those who are as yet involved only with the missionary phase, are assembled for diversely specified purposes. The manner in which we develop our answer to the first question,[2] therefore, will condition the reply we shall have to give to the second question in a later chapter.

It is remarkable that the Acts of the Apostles present us with the first mission of the Apostles, the day after Pentecost, as a passage, or flight, of the Word to which there immediately corresponds a newborn Church, a developing Church, a growing Church. There is not only an apostolic word, but *the Word*—the Word of God which passes through the ministry of its apostles and mission-

[2] For this whole section, we refer the reader to the excellent study by P. A. Liégé, "L'édification de l'Église et le catéchumenat," in *Documentation catéchistique,* No. 37, July 1957, pp. 44-55. The author revised and completed his work in *Parole et Mission,* No. 1, pp. 31-54.

aries, especially Peter, the head of the Apostolic College, and, with its passage, a Christian community which is developing, growing and extending itself. There are ministers of the Word who serve it and communicate it, and there are the hearers of the Word who, upon hearing it, receive it and are gathered by it into "one" Church. "The word of the Lord," St. Luke tells us, "spread throughout the whole country" (Acts 13:49), that is, all around Antioch in Pisidia. The Word spreads like the seed which is sown and which falls, at the pleasure of the Spirit or at the pleasure of him who receives it, either upon good ground, upon rocky ground, or among thorns (cf. Matt. 13:5-8). The Word in this case is the official and public announcement of the preachers.

Elsewhere, St. Luke relates that the "word of the Lord continued to spread" (Acts 6:7), "continued to grow and spread" (12:24), that "mightily did the word of the Lord spread and prevail" (19:20). It is clear that the Word is understood here in its passive sense; it is the Word received or, perhaps, the community which receives it. The latter "grows and spreads" the more firmly the Word is received (cf. also 2:41; 4:4; 5:14; 6:1; 9:31; 11:21-24; 16:5); it is, for St. Luke, the Church which is being born, which is growing and becoming hierarchically organized in the Holy Spirit. Wherever it is announced or heard, therefore, the Word surpasses and goes beyond the few ministers who serve it or the disciples who receive it. It is communicated to all and is revealed in a living body which is the Church.

The image of the Word as a living being which organizes and develops itself, can be clarified by the analogous expressions which St. Luke applies to John the

Baptist as a child (Luke 1:80), or to the Child Jesus: "The child grew and became strong in spirit" (Luke 2: 40), he says of Jesus at home in Nazareth, and a little later on, "Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and grace before God and men" (Luke 2:52). In the Acts, it is no longer John the Baptist or Jesus of Nazareth who grows and develops; it is the Word itself. Like a living person, the Word develops and begins to spread, as our Lord had predicted, "in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and even to the very ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). The whole process could be summed up in the phrase St. Luke uses to present the status of the Church at the moment when Saul, now a convert, is returning to Jerusalem: "The Church . . . was being built up, walking in fear of the Lord, and it was filled with the consolation of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 9:31). Whether the Church preaches the Word, or whether she is established upon receiving it, she somehow becomes one body with this Word.

After St. Luke, it would also be interesting to turn to the teaching of St. Paul, of St. Peter, of St. John. To do so, however, would only be to multiply quotations which come to the same essential conclusion and can be summed up as follows:

There are, in the Word, several relationships to the Church.

On the one hand, the Word issues forth from the Church. Regardless of who holds the specific mission of bearing the Word, it is the Church which acts through that person, because it is in the name of the Church that he acts.

On the other hand, the Word builds the Church (Acts 20:32). In the life of God which the Word communicates,

bonds are of necessity forged among all those who receive it and these bonds are Church bonds: spiritual links among those who are joined in the same faith, the same hope, the same charity, but also visible links among those who profess the same faith in adherence to the same symbol, who are joined together by the same sacramental signs and in the same worship of the true God.

Finally, even more profoundly, the Church and the Word are one body. The latter is the voice of the Church, or, more precisely, the voice of Christ in the Church. Wherever the Church is, even if nothing as yet can be heard of it with the ears, there the Word resounds in a certain way and in varying degrees. But it is necessary that it resound as distinctly and as clearly as possible. The Word of God is not to remain shut up, or to reach only a certain type of pious soul. It is sent "to all the nations" (Mark 13:10), "to every creature" (Mark 16: 15), "to every creature under heaven" (Col. 1:23).

The public and official proclamation of the Word, demanded by the Lord, is necessary if all men are to be reached. It is also necessary in order to penetrate into that interior part of every man which must be captured. In doing each of these things, the mission is the action of the Church. Its ultimate goal, in which it is fulfilled, is the eucharistic community where the Church is sacramentally established.

Three

THE EUCHARISTIC COMMUNITY

The term of the Church's growth, or rather—and this is what concerns us here—the term of the action which builds the Church, the ultimate goal of mission, catechesis, and pastorate, is the eucharistic community.

What, then, is the eucharistic community? In current usage,[1] this is the name given to the Christian community periodically assembled by the Mass. This is a de facto community, no matter what the circumstances of the Mass: whether it is offered in a parish or a religious institution, for the members of a Catholic Action group or a First Communion class, etc. But the expression "eucharistic community," of itself, conveys nothing as to these circumstances and external conditions; it gives no information regarding the origin or the quality of the members who make up the community, or about the backgrounds to which they belong. Essentially, the expression states the fact that the community in question is in some way the result of the eucharistic celebration and communion; that what is best in the community is completely expressed by this celebration.

The altar is the central point around which the community gathers; the altar rail is the table where it offers and receives the divine bread; the eucharistic celebration is that in which, by expressing the essence and the best part of its faith, its hope and its love, it is captured

[1] On this point, we refer to P. A. Liégé, *op. cit.*, and to our article, "Charité et communauté," in *Supplément de la Vie Spirituelle*, No. 8, Feb. 15, 1949, pp. 363-393.

interiorly by Christ and receives sacramentally from Him the grace to live what it expresses, that is, to offer itself to the Father with Christ, and to grow in faith, hope, and charity.

When the believer belongs to several eucharistic communities, each one of them—if it is also a true human community—has him according to one of his roles or one of his qualities. Thus a parish, a Catholic Action group of professional people, a family movement, may gather certain believers—the same ones in each case—around the communion rail, but they will bring them there in different capacities and from different points of view. And so, through all these communities, Christ meets the Christian at every turn and leads him to the perfection of charity.

However, we do not give the name "eucharistic community" to a chance gathering of communicants at the altar rail, or to a group of the faithful who regularly receive communion together but who do not know each other, do not truly pray together, make no "thanksgiving" in common, and do not help each other outside the celebration itself. We reserve the name "eucharistic communities" for those gatherings where the faith, the hope, and the charity of the members are expressed in regular, institutional, eucharistic celebrations, regardless of the frequency of their occurrence.

Community and celebration

This definition now helps us to understand what a real eucharistic celebration must be like. Since the Eucharist is the goal of the sacraments, and at the same time the sacrament of Christian perfection, the Church,

in celebrating the Mass, is performing an act of sacramental perfection. It is here that "her whole personality bursts forth,"[2] here that she offers herself with Christ to the Father in the fullness of her love and praise, here that the graces she receives from Christ are distributed, where all her ministries are made one.

The Church, in the act of eucharistic celebration, is sacramentally the perfect Spouse of Christ, the eschatological people, beneath the veil of signs which mysteriously effect what they signify. She adores God and is united sacramentally to Him in this perfection of love and grace which are communicated to her in view of the eschatological Kingdom. Let us, however, specify what we mean by saying that the Church which "celebrates" the Mass is performing an act of sacramental perfection. If the Eucharist were only a "celebration," a purely formal and external ceremony, we would be far from perfection. The celebration, in fact, must take on the fullness of what it signifies. What is this?

The eucharistic community, by virtue of what it professes externally in the sacrament, is a community of living faith, of confidence and hope, of charity and unity. It presupposes the Word which nourishes the faith, recalls it and awakens it, in some way actualizes it. It assumes a unity of heart among the members, that is, it assumes that its members are mutually acquainted. The unity signified by the Eucharist is only formal, or at least risks being so, when the gathering is made up of members who ignore one another (and here, unquestionably, is the major cause of the too-frequent failure of the pas-

[2] The expression is from P. A. Liégé, *op. cit.*

torate).[3] Finally, the Eucharist signifies that all the communicants are in search of the God of love and that they hope unceasingly to receive from Him, in their everyday life, a deeper grasp of their faith, a greater share in its charity. Still, the celebration does not signify that the celebrants are perfect. If they were, they would no longer need the Eucharist. The elect in heaven celebrate the praises of God without the veil of the "mysteries," or of the sacraments. But, from one Eucharist to the next, the faithful deepen their participation in the life of the paschal community which is carrying them toward the perfect age of Christ.

In one sense, then, not all Masses are entirely alike. The reality signified is always the same, the one Body of Christ, and this Body effects the unity of the members in the eucharistic sacrament, no matter how it is celebrated. But, as a celebration conducted with external signs, the Mass differs in appearance according to the solemnity, the place, the time, the circumstances. All Masses do not have, externally and visibly, the same fullness of meaning. The Paschal Mass of the bishop, with all the faithful and clergy around him, on Easter night, is one thing; quite another is the private, daily Mass of the bishop with only a few of the faithful in attendance. The parish Mass of the pastor each Sunday is quite different from the Mass of a priest who does not have the care of souls. The Mass is the continually re-

[3] The neighbor, according to the parable of the Good Samaritan, is he whom charity recognizes as such. The Eucharist inclines the "communicantes" to this mutual gratitude. (Cf. on this subject, the excellent "Orientations" of M. H. le Sourd, a priest of Saint-Sulpice (Paris), in the *Supplément au bulletin paroissial de S-S.*, April-May, 1957, "Qui est mon prochain?" (pp. 15-23).

newed sacrament of the Lord's Pasch, but the renewal is not always equally manifest; it appears with a greater fullness of external meaning—even though the reality signified must always be the same—each year at the end of Lent and Passiontide, when each "local Church"[4] celebrates Easter around its pastor. This is why there is only one Mass in each church at the great moment of the celebration of the Pasch, that is, during the night of the Easter vigil. A repetition of this unique Mass would take away from it the strength of its external significance. The same is true at Christmas, when the Midnight Mass is also the only one of its kind in each parish, monastic, or collegiate church.

While all celebrations of the Eucharist build up the unity of the Church, there are among them, therefore, from the point of view of their external celebration, times of greater and lesser unity, with the latter preparing for the former. The parish Mass each Sunday, for instance, disposes the congregation to a more perfect "celebration" of the annual Pasch. From Mass to Mass, from Easter to Easter, every year, the people of God comes forth out of its sin and makes its way toward the full stature of Christ and the holiness of God who will be its eschatological perfection in the Kingdom, at last manifest in Himself, beyond all signs and symbols.

"External" celebration then, must not be lightly considered. This sacramental expression which also must involve certain "interior" sentiments—movements of the

[4] Theologians are not agreed on the meaning of "local Church." While everyone accepts the idea of identifying the fully operative local Church with the episcopal Church, some see a local Church in the parish, too, in a secondary sense. It is in this broader sense that we use it here.

will, which are already "external" with respect to acts of the spirit, or to grace—is not something optional, arbitrary, or unnecessary. It is an essential requirement of the sacrament.

Each sacrament is, in fact, a sign. We do not make a sign the way we make a mere gesture. In making a sign, the spirit tends toward what it wishes to signify by the sign. Likewise, both he who administers a sacrament as well as he who receives it, must tend toward what is signified and what they wish to obtain. This is true for every sacrament. It might be easier to understand this if we were to apply to the other sacraments, or at least to one other one, what is true in the case of the Eucharist. In Baptism, for example, let us see how the importance of the thing signified is reflected in the behavior of the one receiving the sacrament.

Let us assume the impossible, that someone would wish to receive Baptism without believing in Jesus Christ, without renouncing Satan or sin. His actions would be a pure simulation and would place an obstacle to grace. Baptism is a gift of the divine life, but, at the same time, it is, on the part of the catechumen, a protestation of faith in the saving death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. If a man believes, it is his faith itself which motivates him in this baptismal procedure, and he expresses his faith as well as he can, simply because he does believe and in the very measure in which he authentically believes. If he believes, he does not expect passively from God a gift which, on the contrary, must be expressed in the active collaboration of the receiver. St. Ambrose says: "It is not to those who are asleep

that the divine blessings are given, but to those who watch and act."[5]

We are certainly not denying that Baptism is first and foremost a gift of the divine life. The point is, that these two operations, the divine and the human, are indivisible. God gives His grace by means of these external signs that are expressed by the one who receives it. It is God who gives faith and who, in giving it, inclines the heart of the believer toward the saving waters. It is He who takes charge from the outset, sometimes secretly and always mysteriously, of the entire interior effort of the believer, who, after finding faith, accepts instruction in it, then one day agrees to submit himself to the baptismal rites. It is also God who leads him, under the effect of successive rituals, of those "scrutinies," for instance, which used to extend for weeks, to the perfection of the sacramental effect. The faith of the convert is already a gift of God;[6] it is already a down payment on the graces of Baptism. This is why God inclines the candidate for Baptism to give himself entirely to the rites so that he will obtain for himself all that they signify.

The same is true, a fortiori, of the Eucharist. A fortiori, we say, because the Eucharist is the sacrament of the living, of those who have already been born to the divine life of Baptism; consequently, from the very outset it calls upon the *cooperation* of those receiving it. We must insist here on the community aspect of the

[5] *Hom. in Luc.*, lib. 3 in cap. 4.

[6] On faith before Baptism, cf. St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.*, 3a, 69, 4, ad 2. We will return to this important subject.

Eucharist which is essential to it. Since it is a sacrament of unity, its very grace consists in bringing the souls of those who participate in it to the most perfect unity possible through thanksgiving, praise, offering and sacrifice, mutual pardon if the need arises, concord and mutual love. If two of the faithful were to celebrate the Eucharist together and receive Communion while obstinately holding on to their resentments, and, if not their mutual hatred, at least their desire for revenge, such dispositions would place a formidable obstacle in the way of the grace of the sacrament. Obviously, no one is absolute master of his feelings. That is true. But one is at least master, with God's grace, of one's will. And the well-disposed will which renounces the evil by which it had been tempted, does not rest until it has overcome the feelings of aversion of its temperament. This is why the grace of the Eucharist brings each member of God's people to manifest in his feelings,[7] in his prayer and his praise, in his daily life, the bond of unity which links him with his brothers.

Jesus Christ Himself, then, by means of the Eucharist, disposes each of us favorably toward the celebration of the sacrament, whose interior effect is to build up His Body, which is the Church. In turning away from the celebration, the Christian risks placing an obstacle to the sacrament's grace of unity. In giving himself up to it, he shows his docility to grace, and the latter, freed

[7] The Christian nevertheless is not performing a false act if he receives despite a feeling toward his co-receiver at the communion rail which is contrary to "communion," so long as his will, and the intention of his will (which is the most real and most profound thing in him, that which corresponds the most to his real self, that which is most himself) does not subscribe, or no longer subscribes, to this feeling.

of all impediments, even the slightest, accomplishes all its beneficent effects.

This is why our eucharistic celebrations throughout the Church year must be conducted so as to give the faithful the best possible means of expressing that unity which the Eucharist produces among them and in them. The grace of the sacrament, which, in order to achieve its effect, inspires, guides, and consecrates all our sacramental actions, will, in this way, produce every blessing.

If Masses, even parish Masses, offer so little awareness of building up a living Church, if they are such mechanical routines for the members of the congregation, the reason must necessarily lie in the lack of awareness people have at such Masses of what they are doing; they are the holy people of God set apart to give the thanks of Jesus Christ to the Father, who is love, in a unity of prayer, offering, and sacrifice, and they have no conception of all this. We do not seek unity because we have not been instructed to, but we also provide obstacles ourselves: our unwillingness to express ourselves, our disdain for translating[8] the faith into our lives, are no less real.

Moreover, this situation is harmful not only to the baptized, but also to those "on the outside": unbelievers who look to the Church, or would look to her, if they saw

[8] Nor must we exaggerate "translating." In this regard, it is to be hoped that pastors themselves have a sound understanding of the eucharistic mystery, and do not ask their faithful, for instance, for interminable offertory processions which obscure the meaning of Christ's sacrifice: His is primary with respect to our own, to which it gives status and reality. All the rituals of the Mass, its chants and its words, themselves translate the mystery of the Eucharist, and one needs only understand them to express them and live them.

something there, as well as catechumens and the newly converted.

The spiritually adult community

Often, after a priest has instructed a convert and prepared him for Baptism, the latter, filled with his new faith, feels a great impatience to finally enter this Church he is learning to love. Then, after his Baptism, when the priest who has received and instructed him, abandons him to his parish, the convert is completely disoriented, no longer feels close to anyone, and sometimes begins to have second thoughts about the Church. Of course, some of this reaction has to be traced to the neophyte's initial enthusiasm; perhaps, too, he has developed the unrealistic hope that he will belong to an ideal community that will no longer be a community of sinners. But the fact remains that Baptism often appears, paradoxically, as a sort of stopping point; beyond it no one knows what to do with new members, except to accord them the same treatment as any "old-timer."

For their part, unbelievers who look on from the outside are not drawn to a Church in which they do not find a eucharistic community which is, if not fervent, at least real. To be sure, they are not looking for this community, because they do not know what it is. Yet if they could see it, they would desire it.[9] This gives us

[9] What puts off nonbelievers, for the most part, according to a recent statement by the pastor of a "people's parish," is a false idea they have of the Church, a false image which they create of her. This unfortunate misunderstanding may, nevertheless, be the occasion for a subtle and perfidious temptation among "good Christians." In order to bear good witness to those outside, they may come to want, or at least to desire, to separate themselves from those whom they consider

a principle to elaborate later on: As the eucharistic community goes, so goes the mission. It is the eucharistic community, the community of true charity in Christ, which presents to unbelievers the God of Charity, the only God, and begins to attract them to the true faith, if they are men of good will.

The eucharistic community needs to be expansive and fecund. Just as a family keeps its youthfulness through bringing children into the world and begins to grow old when no new ones are expected, so too the eucharistic community—particularly in mission lands, but also, today, everywhere else—preserves its youthfulness by constantly drawing new converts to it through its faith and charity. The Church herself, made concrete in a particular eucharistic community, is what usually touches souls. When souls are no longer being touched, this Word which is the Church is not being heard, seen, felt;

"bad Christians," and to form, among themselves, a "Church of the pure." This is the eternal temptation of Pharisaism. This was the temptation of the Donatists, in the fourth century, who wanted to deal only with priests whom they esteemed as holy; it was the temptation of the "Perfect" men and women of Catharism in the thirteenth century; it was the temptation of the Puritans, etc. The Church rejected all these heresies. The Church is composed of sinful members. But the grace of God which passes through her ministers is spotless, holy, and sanctifying. The worst testimony that Christians can give is not to show that they are sinners, but to fail to show that they are the object of incessant mercy on God's part. Sinners they are and will always remain so here on earth, no matter how "holy" they may be. But if they believe in the Love of God, they are gradually sanctified by this Love, and they can demonstrate this over and above their faults. They may also be weak by nature, and some of them may be even more so than others who are nonbelievers; but, if they believe in the mercy of God, they also give testimony of it, in such wise that the "nonbeliever" of good faith must be struck more by this mercy, which slowly is drawing men up out of their misery, than by any weakness these men display.

the community is no longer contributing the testimonial expected of it.

Whatever the apparent fruitfulness of the eucharistic community, it is essential to its life that it be a community on the march toward the Kingdom; a community which, from Mass to Mass, becomes more adult in its faith, its hope, its confidence in God, its charity —a community approaching the eschatological goal of the perfect age of Christ. A "community" that would be nothing but an association of baptized persons, an anonymous gathering of those whose names are inscribed somewhere in a baptismal register, would not correspond to a true eucharistic community. Merely gathering around the altar for the sacramental thanksgiving, does not make this group a eucharistic community; everything still remains to be done in order to make it respond to the requirements, both internal and external, of the sacrament. The eucharistic community is adult in its faith, its confidence, its unity, as well as in the way it expresses these things. However, "adult" does not mean that there are no children in it; physical age does not always coincide with spiritual age, which can be greater or less than the former in the same person, and it is spiritual age with which we are concerned. Nor does "adult" mean that everyone is on the same spiritual level. The community will always have children in the faith —new converts not yet stabilized in their faith, sinners still not perfectly repentant. A community is "adult" not just when all its members are spiritually adult, but whenever those who are adult truly carry along and guide the progress of the whole community, never failing

to make sure of the advance of those who are scattered along behind them, no matter at what stage they may be. It is this kind of "adult" community which the missions need so much in order to bear witness to Christ among nonbelievers and to be a center of attraction for converts.

Four

THE BAPTISMAL COMMUNITY

The Eucharist is the sacramental completion of the Christian initiation, as well as the central act in the whole life of the believer. To take part in the royal banquet, one must at least be baptized, and one should also, as soon as the proper conditions are met, be confirmed.

The community of the confirmed

While it is not necessary for him to be confirmed, a Christian, if he is only baptized, remains both spiritually and institutionally a child among his peers; he needs the confirmation of his Baptism. Just as a stranger who is received into a house cannot be completely "at home" until he has been presented to the head of the house, so too, after a fashion, the baptized person is not fully one of God's household and institutionally responsible for its collective mission until he has been presented to the bishop, the head of the particular Church into which the person has entered.

There is a natural link between adulthood, personal autonomy, and responsibilities. As soon as the child ceases to be a child, that is, as soon as he leaves his parents' custody to live his own life, he becomes responsible, on the same basis as they and all adults are, for the society of his peers. Thus it is for whoever receives Confirmation, which is the sacrament of spiritual adult-

hood and, consequently, the sacrament of all the apostolic responsibilities that the Church bears collectively and that all Christians share according to their rank and function in the Church. The "character" of Confirmation enables the baptized person to carry out, at the hierarchical level where he finds himself, the missionary responsibilities of the Church, and the grace of the sacrament confirms his status as a child of God in view of this ministry and these responsibilities. Like the Apostles on the morning of Pentecost, he receives the full effect of the Holy Spirit. There is, in this regard, an analogy between Easter and Pentecost, Baptism and Confirmation, the priesthood of Baptism and the hierarchical priesthood.

However, no matter what Confirmation is, we shall speak here only of the baptismal community, and what we have to say is to be understood as pertaining to both Baptism and to Confirmation, with such differences as may apply. Moreover, while Confirmation in some way completes and confirms Baptism, the latter contains in itself a *votum* of Confirmation, that is, an ordination thereto.

Eucharistic community and baptismal community

There is a baptismal community as there is a eucharistic one, but it is difficult to give any more distinguishing details about the external characteristics of this community. Still, there is a certain difference between the two. The eucharistic community, as we have said, has various appearances in various situations: the community of the entire "Church" of a diocese grouped

around its bishop, the parish community, the religious community, the community of the Catholic Action group at the time Mass is being celebrated, the community of those on retreat at their daily Mass, etc. These Eucharists are all valid and necessary for Christians. Each represents, in its own way, a stage by which, invisibly, the temple of God is built up; this is especially true where the particular community fulfills the interior requirements that were presented above. Since man belongs to various communities—that of his neighborhood, his profession or trade, his leisure-time world, his circle of friendships, his family—it is important that his bonds within each of these communities be maintained and transfigured by the charity of Christ, and that they all be sacramentalized in the Eucharist.

Of course, these communities do not all have the ability to express the charity of Christ in the same degree. All are necessary, but they do not all have the same value of expression. In the first place, as the archetypal community wherein the unity of the Church in Christ is best expressed, is the eucharistic community which assembles the faithful around their bishop during the Paschal Mass. The others are, each in its own way, necessary but externally imperfect mediations.

The baptismal community does not have this variety of forms. Not all churches[1]—in the sense in which the word *church* designates the place of the eucharistic celebration—are baptismal churches. Monastic churches, abbey churches, certain collegiate churches, are not.

[1] *Church* is written with a small c when the word designates a place or a building, with a capital C when it means a community.

There is a reason why the baptistry is attached only to certain churches and why Baptism is to be administered only in certain communities. What, then, are these communities? And why communities at all?

During the early centuries, Baptisms were performed only in the mother church, that of the bishop, whose function it was to administer the three sacraments of Christian initiation. The need for creating rural churches that were not episcopal sees, beginning in the fifth century, especially among the Gauls, did not universally abrogate the principle of Baptism in the mother church.

The establishment of the episcopal curia in the eleventh century separated the bishop from his functions as immediate pastor of the Cathedral church and took from the latter some of its privileges. Even though this church was thenceforth served by an archpriest, the latter was pastor on the same basis as the heads of the other parishes of the town, which, in the same eleventh century, acquired a sort of territorial and administrative autonomy with respect to the mother church. Pastoral functions in the town were no longer concentrated in the mother church, but were distributed and divided among a certain number of "parishes" of which the bishop was the supreme head. Each of these now formed, both in the city and in the countryside, a kind of "particular" or "local" Church. This Church did not have all the attributes of the episcopal Church,[2] since its immediate

[2] Even though the *episcopal Church* is generally identical with the *diocese,* we prefer the former to the latter of these expressions for two reasons. In the first place, because the jurisdiction of the bishop has not at all times and in all places been determined by a territory; on this

pastor was not the bishop, but it may be considered as the heir of the episcopal Church. This is why, usually, only parishes have baptismal churches. A special dispensation is required to baptize, or to be baptized, in a chapel, for example, and even then, something is always missing from such Baptisms.

What is explained by history also has theological justification. It is fitting, both for the faithful and for the one to be baptized, that the latter's Baptism be celebrated in the parish church. The community of the faithful which is the normal witness to Christ among nonbelievers has some kind of right to see and to become acquainted with those whom it is introducing to the faith. Like a mother happy to have had her prayers answered, the community now feels gratitude welling up in its heart, and this is a good thing. The community is, moreover, stimulated in its generosity and responsibilities by the necessity of leading these new children of God, little by little, to the full stature of Christ. But this visible example and stimulation by the mother church assume their full force only if the catechumens who present themselves for Baptism already form a community—a catechumenate—and if the baptismal waters raise up to God, at least at the visible sacramental level, not an individual Christian but a holy people. This is

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subject, the reader is referred to what is said in Chapter Six. In the second place, because to speak of episcopal Churches is to put the emphasis on the community of God's people gathered around its bishop, and not on a piece of territory. The word diocese, on the other hand, means, in the first place, the territory subject to the jurisdiction of the bishop, and, only secondarily, the people of this territory.

why our whole paschal liturgy, where the baptismal rite plays a special role, never stops speaking of a united people, of reconciliation, of unification. "O God, who hast united the diversity of pagans in confessing Thy name, grant that for those who are reborn through the baptismal font, the faith in their hearts and the fervor of their actions may be one," or again: "O God, all powerful and eternal, who hast established the paschal sacrament as a covenant of human reconciliation, grant that we may effectively imitate that which we celebrate externally." Such also is the sense of this ancient inscription on the Lateran baptistry: "Here is born a people of noble lineage. . . . Nothing henceforth separates the reborn; they are one. For one is the Baptism, one the Spirit, one the faith. In the waters, Holy Mother the Church brings forth in virginal fruitfulness those whom she delivers by the power of the Spirit."[3]

That the baptismal waters of the paschal night produce a newborn "people" is therefore not an imagining of liturgical aestheticism or a transitory phenomenon, nor again just a question of "seriousness" in the manner of receiving converts for Baptism, but a matter of truth. It is the truth that the whole Church, by the grace of God, gives birth. It is also fitting that the entire assembly of those who have already received the gift of God, and who have the honor of participating in its fruitfulness, should be there. To be incorporated into the Church is, first of all, to be incorporated into the church of some specific place. Formerly, one could not prove one's title

[3] Quoted by P. A. Liégé, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

of Christian unless he could say from which church he came.[4]

Faith and Baptism bring us together in Jesus Christ. It is fitting that those who are to be baptized should be united in one celebration, which should not be merely a celebration, but should correspond also to intimate acts of a common faith, hope, and charity.[5] Finally, Baptism is oriented toward the Eucharist, in that it involves a "desire" for the Eucharist. Baptism would not be valid if, by some impossibility, a person received it without even an implicit desire for the Eucharist, and expressed his intention of never receiving it. Continuity is therefore necessary between Baptism and the Eucharist. The nature of the goal determines the kind of movement which leads to it. It is important to require of those who are to be born in the saving fonts of the Church, not only a sincere faith and an efficacious desire of transforming their lives in the charity of Christ, but also a wish for a fraternal life with their Christian brethren, the first testimony of which will usually be a common baptismal celebration.

The faith to which the baptized person comes is not entirely separable from the community which lives it. The more this community knows Jesus Christ and lives by His faith, the more it will be possible to demand of the faith of the aspirant to Baptism, or, at least, the

[4] Cf. Dom. B. Botte, "Les rapports du baptisé avec la communauté chrétienne," in *Quest. lit. et par.*, May-June 1953, pp. 111 ff.

[5] Whence the paradox and anomaly of "clandestine Baptisms." No matter how necessary they may be on a provisional basis in certain cases, they are contrary to the nature of Baptism and the general economy of salvation. One does not "build" a Church up with secret Baptisms.

more it will require the aspirant, knowing the community into which he is entering, to deepen and extend his faith. On the other hand, it is difficult to be more demanding of someone entering a lukewarm community which has little knowledge of its faith and is not very desirous of making progress in it, than of Christians themselves. The work of the pastor in trying to make the lives of his parishioners better through eucharistic celebrations which gradually bring the flock closer to the eternal thanksgiving of Jesus Christ, is also of benefit for catechumens and the newly baptized themselves.

Five

THE CATECHETICAL COMMUNITY

Outside the baptismal community we find what could be called "the catechetical Church." Properly speaking, this is not yet a Church, since the people in the process of formation within it have not passed through the waters of Baptism. It is a "people" though—a people made up of converts. And conversion is the aim of the whole movement which precedes it, starting with unbelief and sin and proceeding to faith, along the often painful and lengthy road of repentance, humility, fear of God, and desire. Thus, the Church, as faith and as Baptism, which is the sacrament of faith, is present embryonically amidst this people.

Baptism, sacrament of faith

Baptism is the sacrament of faith. What does this formula mean? It means that Baptism is the profession of faith and also that Baptism gives faith. This statement does not contradict itself. Cornelius had received faith and the Holy Spirit before receiving Baptism. This is exactly the reason why Peter baptized him (Acts 10:47). St. Thomas comments: "Before his Baptism, Cornelius had received—and all those who are in a similar situation also receive—grace and the virtues through the effect of faith in Christ and the implicit or explicit desire for Baptism. Then, finally, Baptism confers a greater intensity of grace and virtues."[1] Elsewhere, St. Thomas

[1] *Summa Theol.*, 3a, 69, 4, ad 2. Cf. also 3a, 69, 5, ad 1.

teaches that "the first conversion to God takes place through faith."[2] This teaching is not new. It is in conformity with the whole tradition of the Church.

In the fourth century, St. Ambrose, preaching after the death of the Emperor Valentinian II, who was assassinated before he could be baptized, declared: "As far as I am concerned, I have lost the one whom I was going to beget through the Gospel, but he has not lost the grace he asked for. . . . What do we have in our power except will and desire? Lately, he had again manifested the desire of being initiated before going into Italy, and declared his intention of receiving Baptism at my hands as soon as possible. . . . Should he not then have the grace which he desired, for which he asked? Surely, if he asked for it, he has received it. And that is why it is written (Wis. 4:7): 'But the just man, though he die early, shall be at rest.' "[3]

St. Jerome is even more explicit. Commenting on a verse in Matthew ("Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them . . . "—Matt. 28:19) he writes: "First, the Apostles teach the nations, then they baptize the instructed nations with water. Indeed, it cannot be that the body should receive the sacrament of Baptism before the soul receives the truth of the faith."[4]

[2] *Id.*, 1a, 2ae, 113, 4.

[3] *P.L.* XVI, col. 1368 and 1374, quoted by Ch. Journet, *Théologie de l'Église*, Desclée de Br., 1958, p 358.

[4] *Comm. in Matth.*, lib. 4. In the text ("Non enim potest fieri, ut corpus baptismi recipiat sacramentum, nisi ante anima fidei susceperit veritatem") "truth" corresponds to "sacrament." It could be translated: "The body cannot receive the sacramental sign of Baptism before the soul has received the reality signified, which is the faith."

From these texts, we may conclude with St. Basil: "Faith and Baptism are two connected and inseparable means of salvation. Faith finds its fulfillment in Baptism, and Baptism is founded on faith. Both have the same sacred formula: We believe in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and, likewise, we are baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. First comes the profession of faith which leads to salvation; then follows Baptism, which sets the seal on our adherence."[5]

Everything begins with conversion, which is the passing from unbelief to faith which justifies the impious soul. But this conversion is a grace of God in which Baptism already plays a role. St. Thomas says that the faith of the convert is accompanied by the "desire, implicit or explicit, for Baptism." From the moment of conversion and even before, as soon as the soul moves mysteriously toward the truth, Christ is at work in the soul. He seals His work with Baptism. In like manner, for his part, the catechumen ratifies his conversion by his baptismal profession of faith.[6]

[5] *Traité du Saint-Esprit,* I, 17 (*P.G.,* 32, 117). Quote by P. A. Liégé, *op. cit.,* p. 49.

[6] Wondering how certain effects can be attributed to Baptism, as for example, incorporation into Christ, since these effects are already attributable to faith (cf. Eph. 3:17), St. Thomas replies: "Adults who believe in Christ upon conversion are incorporated spiritually in Him; but later on, when they are baptized, they are incorporated into Him somehow in a corporal way, that is, by means of a visible sacrament; and if they had not desired the latter, they would not even have been able to be incorporated spiritually" (3a, 69, 5, ad 1). Elsewhere, St. Thomas explains why the cause (Baptism) is here the sign of the effect produced (sacramental sign). It is because, he says, it is an "instrumental cause," that is, a cause which "is not only cause, but also, in its own fashion, effect [of the principal cause which is God]" (3a, 62, 1, ad 1).

There is, therefore, no need to ask ourselves which comes first—the profession of faith or Baptism. There would be no real profession of faith without the grace which is given by Jesus Christ in Baptism. The two coexist but on different levels. The gift of grace precedes every good and holy act, but it is invisible despite this mysterious sign which simultaneously seals it and reveals it. The gift of grace produces, within the adult's mind and conscience, the faith which is fulfilled at Baptism in an explicit act of adherence to the saving death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Church and catechumenate

An assembly of catechumens, then, already constitutes an embryonic Church. In this assembly, there is the same need for homogeneity as we saw there was in the community of the baptized. We may even add, since the communities are usually separated — catechumenate on one side, baptismal and eucharistic community on the other — that it is particularly important for them to be homogeneous throughout their development. A working-class catechumenate, such as it was possible to establish some years ago, often did not lead to and culminate in a parish eucharistic community. Conversely, a parish in which middle-class social values were more honored than the demands of the Gospel, would probably be hostile or even closed to a catechumenate made up chiefly of working-class converts.

Catechumenate and catechism

Attention should be given, at this point, to the case of children.

Do children who have been baptized, who are receiving a Christian education and are already enrolled either in pre-catechism or catechism classes in preparation for First Communion, form a "catechumenate"? We do not think so and we reserve this term for adults. Baptized children, by the very fact of their Baptism, constitute that "baptismal Church" of which we have spoken and which is the stage of the Church immediately preparatory to that of the eucharistic community.

The case of children baptized from birth, from whom no *act* of faith can be expected until they reach the age of reason, is exactly the opposite of the case of the converts about whom we have been speaking. For the latter, the act of faith precedes Baptism. For children, Baptism, which along with grace gives all the virtues, including that of faith, precedes the personal act of faith. The Church in some way supplies the faith of the child presented for Baptism by Christian parents, members of the Church. It is in the faith of the Church that the child is baptized; generally, too, it is thanks to the faith of the parents whose marriage bears the sign of the union of Christ and the Church. They are the ordinary intermediaries for the infant and usually take the initiative in bringing him to the baptismal font.

What has been said about the connection between faith and Baptism must also apply here. The child has received Baptism, but Baptism of itself postulates a personal act of faith. Someday, this child — or the adolescent he will have become, or the adult, if he waits — will have to put his personal seal on his own Baptism by making the act of faith which the sacrament demands. This is why First Communion is ordinarily accompanied

by renewal of the baptismal vows (which, usually, should *precede* the First Communion). There is no need to ask at what exact moment this personal "seal" is affixed. It may be before the renewal of the vows, it may be afterwards, mysteriously, in the depths of the soul, where this exterior declaration of faith has so far been only a formal act, the result of an education which in no way prepared the person for anything deeper.

In giving their children instruction in the faith, however, Christian parents, as well as those who help them, are in a better position than the usual catechist, because they can count on their children being given grace "on account" for the act which they must one day make. Life in a Christian family usually leads easily to this act of faith, the seed for which was sown in Baptism and needs only the normal development of the spiritual powers to bear fruit. And from Baptism to the Eucharist, the two poles of every Christian life, the child of a Christian family will also be helped by a whole universe of "signs" that will be precious aids for him — signs of the Cross, family prayers, holy water, visits to church, etc., or signs of the sacraments, such as Confession, and later on, Confirmation.

What has just been said obviously applies to children baptized in Christian homes. It cannot be said for nonbaptized children of nonbaptized parents, or of parents who are baptized but not practicing. Can it be said of the baptized children of baptized but nonpracticing parents—children who, unfortunately, are so numerous in the catechism classes of certain parishes?

The case of nonbaptized children of nonbaptized and nonbelieving parents immediately poses a missionary

problem. Since the child belongs to the parents, the missionary usually seeks, first of all, the conversion of the latter, in dealing with non-Christian homes. It will then be the responsibility of the converted parents to present their children for Baptism. The Church, respecting the order willed by Providence, does not usurp this right. So long as the home has not been converted, or so long as the home does not consent, the child concerns the missionary only indirectly.

The case of baptized children of baptized parents who have become practical nonbelievers, or indifferent and nonpracticing, goes against the very nature of grace. This situation is, unfortunately, real and widespread. Here again, the Church cannot force parents who do not consent. If, however, they do consent, and if, as sometimes happens, they even consent readily—for instance, if they ask that the child be instructed—the problem of catechesis will then take on an entirely different light. In this regard, we sometimes speak of "missionary catechesis." The expression is paradoxical, but it is partly justified. It means that in this instance it is necessary to lead the child to the faith, or to convert him—to lead him to renounce the unbelieving environment in which he lives, at least insofar as this milieu is contrary to the faith—as well as to teach him the catechism. Thus, "missionary" work is justified for others besides the nonbaptized.

We must even broaden the case. Children may indeed be from a Christian family, yet be subject chiefly or in part to an influence other than that of the family. Immersed in a materialistic environment, or a pseudoscientific or atheistic environment, or, as in certain mission

territories in Africa or elsewhere, still integrated into a pagan world and its customs and social rituals, they must be constantly defended and armed against a movement which tends unceasingly to dissolve their faith. Here again the teaching of the catechism involves missionary activity.

Extent of the missions

Let us widen our perspectives even more and consider certain of our societies whether in Europe itself, or, a fortiori, elsewhere. The environment, quite often, is not a help for the Christian. The walls which used to protect the Christianity of the Middle Ages have indeed fallen, and the juridical barriers which, thanks to severe sanctions, used to protect people against heresy, schism, or superstition, have been overthrown. The waves of irreligion, whose pressure comes not only from without, have penetrated on every side into the Christian fortress, and the man of this ancient construction is torn between the opposing tendencies of Christianity and atheism. What is true for Europe is all the more true for Africa and Asia, where Christianity finds itself continually confronted with Islamism, Hinduism, sects, paganism, or irreligion. Therefore we may speak, after a fashion, of the necessity for a missionary pastoral teaching, a teaching that is not content with strengthening doctrine, guiding the life of prayer and devotion, perfecting Christian law and reminding people of the rules of morality, but also is concerned with capturing anew or revitalizing that faith which leads to conversion and on which is built the entire spiritual edifice of the Christian. This renewal will come through new testimonies of faith and

through frequent reminders of the initial message of salvation: God has sent His Son to save us. This missionary pastoral teaching, which because of the reality of sin, of temptation, of error, always has some justification, is particularly needed in our day.

Some will say that to thus broaden the missionary function will cause it to lose in precision what it gains in extent. This would be true if it were the entire range of the pastorate that was involved, from the proclamation of the Word of salvation to the care of the flock of God. But the object of missionary activity is unbelief as such. If we extend the range of this activity, it is because unbelief today flows in some manner beyond the world of the unbaptized and the nonbeliever. Like a termite or a deadly cancer, it infiltrates occasionally even into the conscience of the Christian himself, or rather into his spirit and his heart, because he is not always aware of its presence. In this state, he is divided; what is best in him tends to God, but a part of him remains laicized, secularized, and has not yet fully accepted Baptism and the Church. Professing the Christian faith in a legalistic and external manner, such a "Christian" shares certain ideas about the world which are those of atheistic materialism reassembling under a new form the old demons of egotism, concupiscence, greed, self-love and love of pleasure. On such foundations, nothing solid can be built or maintained. The foundations must hold steady as the building goes up.

This formal, not material, division between mission, catechesis, and pastorate, which the facts force us to adopt will make more difficult the task of laying down precise rules, in each case, for each individual action, so diverse are the possible combinations in each Chris-

tian, of adult faith, the faith of conversion, the fear which leads to faith, and the prejudices or options of unbelief. It is up to each pastor, catechist, or missionary, to judge the individual case and to adapt his action accordingly. Their judgments will be all the more crucial as the three stages—mission, catechesis, pastorate—will often not follow each other but will necessarily be present simultaneously (at least in the case of catechesis and the pastorate) within the same activity.

Thus, catechism taught to the children of workers in a Marxist community will have to take into consideration the influence on the young of the materialism more or less lived by everyone, which dissolves and corrupts the faith. And what is true for the teaching of catechism to baptized youth is also true, *mutatis mutandis,* for the catechesis of adults. The instruction given in the pagan environment of Africa, for example, where magic, sorcery, and superstition still reign, will constantly have to reinforce the bases of the faith against these errors. In certain respects this catechesis will, paradoxically, be made easier, too. It is easier, for instance, to speak of the devil in a country full of sorcery, of magic, of secret religious practices (which are often tragic, too, as in anonymous poisonings), than it is in some of our so-called Christian countries.

We see, then, that missionary activity overlaps catechetical instruction and pastoral care, although it is necessary to distinguish these successive stages in any section of the Church. This overlapping is an additional reason for analyzing more closely missionary activity itself—what characterizes and defines it. But first there is a prior question which up to now has scarcely been touched: Where should the Church be implanted?

Six

IMPLANTING THE CHURCH

We have already noted the necessity for the Church to be "implanted" not only in every area, but also in certain milieux or certain classes. The facts themselves are eloquent on this subject, since we see communities and Christian institutions being founded and developed which have no direct relation to any specific territory—specialized Catholic Action movements, university parishes, extraparochial student groups, etc. If it is true that the living thought of the Church is often expressed in action before being formulated by theologians, then we must put considerable stock in these signs.

However, since this work does not pretend to be more than an outline for a theology, we shall give a summary answer to the question of where the Church should be implanted first—whether in each place on earth, in each people, or in each environment. This question actually involves in and of itself all the data of Church history, of sociology, of theology.

Evangelizing all men

Let us begin by recalling a fundamental principle upon which any answer here depends. This basic principle of pastoral theology is that man, wherever he is, in order to be entirely converted, evangelized, and baptized, must be seized in all that he is—in all his faculties, his powers, his relationships—by Christ and the Church.

If he belongs to a country in such a way that his rela-

tionship to this country creates in him an essential quality without which he would no longer be what he is, then he needs to be incorporated into an indigenous Church which speaks his language and in which he can feel completely at home. But if his interior self is also qualified, sometimes even more so, by his belonging to a class (or to a milieu), then he also needs a Christian community of that class or milieu so that the part of his being which naturally adheres to this environment and is formed thereby, can also be "baptized" and Christianized.

In our large modern cities where a man's belonging to his neighborhood often counts for very little (have people not defined the local parish as "a service station for spiritual needs"?), "functional parishes" are proliferating (cf., on this subject, the previously cited book *L'Église et la ville,* by R. d'Izarny), as well as professional Christian communities, Sunday Masses for the members of "movements" or "circles," etc. Moreover, we find, more and more frequently in the world, Churches of different rites or of different languages side by side in the same area with local dioceses or parishes. Such are the dioceses of the various rites of the Middle East, which are superimposed on one another in the same territory. No one today is astonished to see in the same city of Beirut or its environs, living side by side, the patriarch of all Chaldean Catholics, called the Patriarch of Babylon and Baghdad, the patriarch of the Syrian Catholics, called the Patriarch of Antioch, the patriarch of the Armenians, called the Patriarch of Constantinople, the patriarch of the Maronites, also called the Patriarch of Antioch, who extends his jurisdiction well beyond the boundaries of Lebanon, the Apostolic Delegate of the

Latins, etc. Even today, do we not see that nonterritorial "dioceses" and "parishes" of different nationalities, languages, or rites are becoming more and more widespread in America and Europe, in Paris, and London and all large modern cities? Finally, to illustrate the phenomenon we are describing, we could mention the case of the "diocese" created in Germany for the French occupation forces, a "diocese" which obviously was superimposed on existing dioceses of the area.

Modern history and sociology

Historically, the local church was nearly always and almost everywhere uniquely territorial. The ancient principle in the fourth and fifth centuries was: one city, one bishop, one church, one Eucharist. Still, there were exceptions, such as the primitive clan churches in Ireland, each connected with a clan and only secondarily with a territory (which itself could change), but at any rate mainly dependent for its growth or decline on the fortunes of arms of the clan. Such, too, were the nomad churches of Arabia in the fifth and sixth centuries which, being attached to nomadic peoples, followed them in their moves. There were also nomadic churches among the Tartars and other peoples of the steppes in the thirteenth century. Nevertheless, these are only exceptions.

That the principle of the local church almost always and everywhere prevailed, to the extent that other possibilities tended to be overlooked, stems at least in part from the fact that the territory had an almost total control over man's inner self. Whether he was a serf or a lord, whether he belonged to one craft guild or another, the Burgundian of the thirteenth century was

quite different from his contemporary from Picardy or Poitou. Each was what he was based primarily on the country where he lived. Practically all human relationships whether economic, commercial, cultural, religious, or personal, were carried out in the crucible of a particular locality. "To belong to a country" was an expression that meant something and had a value in an almost absolute sense. In each region, the differences of climate, the methods of cultivating the soil, and the tools, the dialect, the festivals and the folklore, the traditions, were familiar to each man and were not only his own expressions, but fashioned him interiorly to some degree.

Modern man has many more relations than those he maintains with his immediate neighbors.[1] His professional relationships, his relations with friends, his cultural relationships if he is a student or a reader or if he

[1] Assuming, moreover, that he has only one house and lives there twelve months out of the year as in the old days, which very rarely is the case nowadays, even in the country, ever since "vacations" became a "law." In the country near Paris, there are even some villages where half, sometimes two-thirds of the houses are occupied by Parisians on Sundays. And we are not speaking of the many occupations which require frequent changes of residence, such as the teacher's or the military man's. However, what is true of modern man, or, more precisely, of the man of the modern world which is beginning to unfold, is not true yet of everyone. A missionary in Cameroun, the principal of a school, recently said of his pupils: "The children come to school with their village in their bones," and, taking this unavoidable phenomenon into consideration, he grouped the children in his school according to the villages from which they came. It is unlikely that their occupation later on, or any other activity, will mark them more profoundly or for better than their village. "Their village" is what their interior self adheres to most closely, and also is the main instrument of their human conditioning. The interior hold on man of a city neighborhood on the other hand, or of a part of that neighborhood, or even of a particular floor of a building, is not that strong. One may regret this fact, but it is still a fact.

takes part in research, his leisure-time and vacation relationships, involve different sets of people and do not coincide with his neighborhood or community relationships. His interior self, which is structured and shaped by all these relationships, can no longer be defined or at least not predicted, if one begins with nothing more than the knowledge of where he lives. While a neighborhood Church, a *local* Christian community, formerly sufficed to take charge of and Christianize all human relations, it can no longer do so. Modern man, by means of the relationships into which he is drawn by his activities, belongs to "human spaces" (according to the phraseology of modern sociology) that do not coincide and are not all geographically delimited. It is for this reason, also, that economists coined the expression "abstract space" to denote a network of human relationships impossible to define geographically though otherwise quite capable of definition.

We had been accustomed since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, to consider the world as a patchwork of nations (which was only partly true, as a matter of fact, and meant that we were "projecting" our European social forms in all the other continents) and each nation as a patchwork of different rural areas and cities. Now modern sociology presents the world to us as a complex ensemble of networks of influence superimposed and intertwined, whose points of contact have a world-wide influence. In France, for instance, the geographical country is Christian, and the Church is established there and is hierarchically structured. But the "sociological countries," in Canon Boulard's unhappy but expressive phrase, are not all in the Church to the same degree.

The working class was born, as such, outside the Church; it constitutes a sort of "country" within a country and awaits a missionary effort, as we said before in quoting M. R. d'Izarny's conclusions. Its pole of influence is very often outside the geographical country where its atheism develops. Also, the milieu of the technicians, who are becoming increasingly allied the world over, leads a life which is more and more its own: it has its own culture, mentality, principles—all, at times, strangely impermeable to the teachings of the Church. Finally, also, the half-million Moslems living in France somehow escape the "geographical" country in which they live. Their real life is elsewhere. They are even ordinarily quite perfectly attuned to this "elsewhere."

Such facts, examples of which could be multiplied endlessly, mean that the implantation of the Church in geographical areas is not the only missionary effort[2]

[2] It is, however, the only one which up to now has been considered by the missiologists, even the most eminent. Cf. A. V. Seumois, O.M.I., *Introduction à la missiologie,* Schöneck-Beckenried, Switzerland, 1952, p. 109; E. Loffeld, C.S.Sp., *Le problème cardinal de la missiologie et des missions catholiques,* Ed. Spiritus, Rhenen, Holland, pp. 254-258; the polemics surrounding Frs. Charles, Godin, and their "schools." In addition, one may consult the various essays on missiology according to the bibliography by A. Perbal, O.M.I., *Lo studio delle Missioni,* coll. "Orizzonti Missionari," Ed. U.M.C., Rome, 1946.

However, we must make an exception in the case of an excellent study by G. Naidenoff, S.J., "Évolution du concept de Mission," in *Encyclopédie francaise,* Vol. XIX, pp. 19-44-15 to 19-46-3, Paris, 1957. Fr. Naidenoff writes aptly: "the geographical notion of the missions, founded on the distinction between the evangelizing countries and those being evangelized, is being erased with each passing day, and simply marks a stage in the spiritual impregnation of the universe."

Fr. Dunas stated the problem well in *Parole et Mission,* No. 3, Oct. 1958, pp. 342-366: "Perspectives d'une théologie missionnaire." Regarding "human spaces" and the missions, read J. Thomas, "Les 'espaces' de la mission," in *Parole et Mission,* No. 4, Jan. 1959, pp. 16-33.

which is useful and necessary today. The facts speak for themselves, and it is enough to recall once again the existence of the "dioceses" or "parishes" of different rites, nationalities, or languages, that were mentioned above.

A diversity of communities

Modern man, therefore, if his entire multirelational self is to be Christianized, needs to be taken in hand by diverse eucharistic communities which will correspond as precisely as possible to the various types of relationships in his world and in which he will participate regularly, though in varying patterns. The whole question is: According to what patterns?

We think that, almost everywhere and for a long time to come, the local parish will retain its privilege of being at least the basic eucharistic community on which the others are established. A sign of this is the fact that parochial action is today becoming more respected, after having been looked down upon in the years following the second World War. But this criticism was not useless. Today we have a better knowledge of what must be required of the parish so that pastoral, as well as missionary, action will bear its fruit. At least three conditions are indispensable:

1. The parish must exist on a human scale. The most serious studies made on this subject allow us to conclude that the parish is no longer in a position to fulfill all its duties if it includes more than four to five thousand faithful. "Five thousand," Father Winninger writes in a documented study, "is to be considered as the danger point." How many urban parishes have not exceeded

this point? Pastoral experience, as well as sociology itself, shows that this figure is almost universally exceeded, and that it can scarcely be otherwise. Yet what if it is true that, once over this figure, it is impossible to constitute a true religious community, or even a simple human community?

2. But this is precisely the second condition for the parish: that it effectively constitute a eucharistic community as we have defined it. This assumes that the members of the community can know one another and do actually know one another, that a current of fraternal mutual help runs among them, and that they give authentic testimony to their charity in Christ. The parish, as we have said, is not a service station for individual spiritual needs, though it becomes just that, unfortunately, too often. The spiritual needs of each one are never satisfied, and the Eucharist itself easily becomes a lie, as St. Thomas says, speaking about all the sacraments, if no interior reality corresponds to what it signifies. But the reality signified and produced by the Eucharist is the unity of the communicating body.

3. Finally, the parish assembly, based on a geographical area, must make no distinction among people: no discrimination of races, of languages, of environments, etc. Yet we have to recognize that many parishes do not, as a matter of fact, meet this condition. We have already spoken of linguistic parishes, and we could mention those Christian communities which managed in the past or are now still doing so, to make the distinction between Negroes and whites. In France itself, urban parishes are either the parishes of the middle class, or (very rarely), the working class. It is extremely diffi-

cult for the parish to be equally accommodating to both these environments. The art and the interior style of the parish, the pictures—or the absence of images which a certain cultivated class affects—the language, the conversation, the subjects of interest, will be spontaneously different in a middle-class and a working-class parish. Some young pastors are anguished by this problem and they cannot see that here and there success has been achieved. Still, if the parish assembles just one group to the exclusion of another, it is no longer entirely a territorial community; it becomes a community of the group. For good or ill, it is closed to the other group. It is a fact that we see urban parishes closed to working-class people, and even rural parishes more and more closed to farm laborers. Certain priests have even been led to think that placing members of the working class in "bourgeois" communities involves for the former the risk of evasion and forgetfulness of their apostolic responsibilities in their own environment. We can see how difficult are the requirements posed by this third condition.

Still, these conditions only serve to make pastoral action freer, they do not replace it. Through the fulfillment of these conditions, the eucharistic community will be made possible, but it will be constituted only through the concerted action of the pastor and his flock. Nothing here can replace the action of the Word of God and of the sacraments.

The important role which has devolved upon the local Christian community, that is to say, the parish, does not mean that it suffices today, or will suffice tomorrow, to evangelize or care for all the sheep of the pasture

which it occupies. Other eucharistic communities which are not territorial must coexist with it. It has been shown how necessary this is, if man, in all of his dimensions, is to be evangelized.

In order to determine the rhythms of the eucharistic celebrations in a particular community, it would be necessary to know the exact measure and relative importance of the participation by each person in the community in his network of relationships: in his neighborhood, family, work, Catholic Action group (if any), etc. To the degree that this determination is possible, it is more a matter of sociology than of ecclesiastical organization. Religious sociology today is trying to rearrange ecclesiastical territories in terms of the human needs which have changed so drastically in those territories within just the past century. In addition, it must, insofar as possible, rediscover all the networks of human relationships of any consequence, in order to incorporate them into corresponding Christian communities (or at least to be aware of the need, sometimes the urgency, for such incorporation).[3]

[3] Is it necessary to add that there is no absolute isolation of human groups? The "human spaces" not defined by territory represent groups of men who actually live in such territories. There is a relationship among all the territories on earth (or at least it would be fitting that it be so; it is unfortunate for such territories when these interchanges are suppressed), there is also a relationship among the nonterritorial "human spaces," and there is, finally, a relationship between these "spaces" and territories. Whence it is, providentially, that these "spaces," geographico-cultural in nature, can be evangelized either from the viewpoint of the territory, or from that of a cultural or linguistic network. To give an example, it is possible to think that a mass conversion of Japan or of Black Africa would not fail to have an influence on Japanese living in the world outside Japan, or on Africans living outside Africa. Conversely, a massive conversion of the five hundred thousand Japanese living today in Brazil could be the point of departure for a Japanese Christianity not only in Brazil but also in Japan.

Since the Church exists principally for the salvation of man and not for the construction of beautiful places of worship or the consecration of deserted spaces, this research into structure and organization, so useful to the Church in view of her proper action, is the urgent concern of religious sociology. In the last analysis, it obviously is the function of the hierarchy, on its highest levels, to judge which is the best organization for the pastoral care of God's flock. This organization is to be promoted at all levels of the hierarchy. Every human space, even the territorial space of a diocese, is an individual, particular one. Only the Catholic Church in her universality goes beyond all individualisms, all particularisms.

Seven

THE MISSION, THE WORD, AND THE WITNESS OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Now we come to the most remote stage of the eucharistic community—the mission. This is the first phase of the movement which brings the people of God toward the eucharistic banquet hall. Neither the word nor the reality of "the mission" are strange, since we have defined pastorate, catechesis and mission together, and since we have already noted in passing that mission activity was also present in certain forms of pastoral care and catechetical instruction. But the missionary action in these cases will only be true and effective, normally, if those carrying it out know the laws proper to the mission considered in itself. It is this which we must now study.

The immediate goal of the mission properly so called, as we have said, is to convert, that is, to bring the unbeliever, or rather the "nation" (in the sense that this word is used to mean a "Gentile" people, in the biblical phrase), to a conversion in the faith. And, as St. Paul tells us, ". . . faith depends on hearing" (Rom. 10:17). This definition of the purpose of the mission does not contradict the other definition according to which the object of the mission is to "plant the Church"[1] in a given place, or, as the case may be, in a given society. We

[1] Or, according to another formulation, "to build up the Church." In the first formulation, the word Church is ordinarily taken to designate above all the institutional and sacramental apparatus of the Church. In the second, its connotation is broader and more fitting.

shall see, on the contrary, that these two definitions, taken from different points of view, imply one another.

In this chapter, and in the three subsequent ones, we shall consider the elements which work together, with the grace of God, to make the faith germinate in the hearts of nonbelievers: the Word and the witness of the Christian community, miracles, the witness of martyrdom.

The Word

The fundamental fact of the missionary theology of the New Testament is to be sought first of all in the Acts of the Apostles. Here St. Luke relates the very first missions of the Apostles and sets forth fundamental laws of all missionary activity. These laws derive, according to the Acts, from each of the "cycles" which highlight this first missionary history. Here, according to two recent commentators on the Acts,[2] are the elements of each new missionary action:

An event, which will provoke a chain reaction. In the first cycle, this is the account of Pentecost (Acts 1:6-14), and in the second, the curing of the lame man (3:1-11).

A discourse or sermon addressed to the audience brought together by the event. The resumé given of the first such discourse by St. Luke (2:14-36; 3:12-26), presents the essence of the Christian message, the Good News of Jesus Christ dead and risen.

This preaching then provokes a *persecution:* the

[2] P. Guilbert and J. Hamaide, "Résonances pastorales du plan des Actes des Apôtres," in *Eglise Vivante,* March-April 1957, No. 21, pp. 85-113.

Apostles are arrested and accused before a tribunal. Missing in the first cycle, this persecution is found in most of the others (4:1-22).

But the sermon also results in *conversions,* in growing numbers: three thousand in the first cycle (2:37-41), five thousand in the second (4:4).

Whether the event mentioned above is ordinary or extraordinary—such as a sudden cure or a miracle—it is correlated, during the apostolic times, with the Word. The event confirms the Word which precedes it, bears striking testimony to it, or else, on the contrary, prepares for the Word that will cause its significance to burst forth. It is in this last fashion, for example, that the preaching of Peter after Pentecost, or Peter's sermon after the healing of the lame man at the Temple gate, are presented. This is not to say that at times the Word does not already bear, in and of itself, its own witness, but, to supply credentials for so momentous an announcement, it needs some external support.

The interior witness of the Word

The human word usually bears, in and of itself, its own witness. The Word of God became human word in order to put itself within our reach and to be heard by us. It uses the words of the human languages in which it is expressed; it communicates a message from him who has received it to him who has not as yet received it. Thus it is with every human word, whose function it is, or at least, one of whose main functions it is, to establish communication between minds.

The word, therefore, builds human relationships on the basis of the truth which it expresses. The word is

normally the expression of some truth. Where there is no longer any truth in the words expressed, human relationships are corrupted and where there are only corrupted relationships, relationships of defiance, animosity, hostility, there are no relationships at all, and therefore, no further progress. Even material and technical relationships are impossible, because progress requires collaboration and, consequently, the possibility of wholesome and solid relationships. And where there is no more progress, neither is there any life in society.

Why is it that words are sometimes corrupted and no longer play their role, which consists in communicating a message of truth? This is the fault either of the one who speaks it, because he lies, or of the one who receives it, because, legitimately or not, he has no confidence. The word can only be heard in a climate of truth, or rather of veracity, on the one side, and of confidence, on the other.

The testimony which the word gives to itself stems partly, therefore, from the one who speaks it. "Partly," we say, for certain words need no other testimonial in order to be understood but the truth which they express. The statement, "man is made to be good," is true and must be understood as such no matter who says it. That which is true bears witness to itself in the heart of every upright man and accredits such words as these to those who hear them. Not to believe that man is made for good; and to think, for example, that he is made for evil, is to reveal that one has destroyed in oneself, by doing evil, the source of light and the gift of accepting the truth which is natural for every spirit created in the image of God. "Everyone who does evil hates the light,

and does not come to the light, that his deeds may not be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light that his deeds may be made manifest, for they have been performed in God" (John 3:20-21). Not to believe, to take another example, a man voicing a cry of pain under the effect of a violent shock that anyone would find painful, is to reveal—even if the man were habitually evil—that oneself is evil also.

The witness of the speaker

But the truth of what is expressed may not be so evident. It then has need of "external" witness, beginning, as we have said, with the witness of the speaker. If the latter is a habitual liar, people will have no confidence in him. If he exaggerates in everything he says, people will discount his words proportionately. Such sins or defects as these would, then, be particularly grave in one whose job it was to announce the message of salvation. The message would be lost, not because of what it contained, but because of the one who was speaking.

The first witness, consequently, which the word of the one who evangelizes requires is that of his absolute loyalty, of his humility before God, of his ability to renounce himself in order to be the faithful reporter of a truth which does not belong to him—in a word, the witness of his sanctity. Every lack of sanctity, or of perfect charity, creates a difficulty for belief on the part of the listener. Every lack of unity in the Christian community from which the evangelist comes presents a similar difficulty. A major example of the latter kind of difficulty is the division amongst Christian Churches. How can the Protestant pastor and the Catholic priest

announce side by side the message of Christ on unity, especially that of John 17, without a profound sorrow, or without hypocrisy? The realization of the scandal of disunity is, we know, behind the ecumenical movement,[3] whose necessary connection to missionary action is clear.

The openness of the hearer

Nevertheless, every man can refuse to hear the Word even if he can find no fault either in it or in the one who speaks it. Thus he condemns himself in not receiving the truth: "He who rejects me, and does not accept my words," said our Lord shortly before His passion, "has one to condemn him. The word that I have spoken will condemn him on the last day" (John 12:48). The poor reception we give to the Word of truth stems from our evil heart. When men prefer the darkness to the light, it is because "their works are evil" (John 3:19). Also, as our Lord tells the Jews at the Feast of the Tabernacles: "He who is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear is that you are not of God" (John 8:47).

Who is to determine, in the interplay of relations between the speaker and the hearer, the degree of insufficient holiness on the part of the speaker (or of the society he represents) which discredits in part his message, and the degree of the sin or insufficient openness of the hearer, which hardens his understanding?

[3] If the missionary problem does, in fact, underlie "ecumenism," it is useful to point out that the ecumenical confrontation today concerns the missionary movement as such. Cf. on this subject the pertinent study by Y. Congar, O.P., "La rencontre actuelle des confessions chrétiennes," in *Parole et Mission*, No. 4, Jan. 1959, pp. 105-123.

Human word and divine Word

A passage from the Gospel of St. John (8:12-59) is relevant to the subject here and deserves some attention. On the Feast of Tabernacles Jesus told the Jews that because they were not of God they did not hear His words. Yet He had not yet told them anything they were unable to believe. He was in the presence of the Jews "who had come to believe in him" (John 8:31) up to that moment, and He wanted to bring them little by little to hear the whole truth about Himself (John 8:58). At the beginning of this dialogue (8:31), however, Jesus is, in the eyes of the intrigued audience, probably no more than a prophet. What He tells them does not at first require them to look deeper, yet their hearts close up and prevent them from going further. Jesus sees it and tells them: "I know that you are the children of Abraham; but you seek to kill me because my word takes no hold among you. . . . If you are the children of Abraham, do the works of Abraham. But as it is, you are seeking to kill me, one who has spoken the truth to you which I have heard from God. That is not what Abraham did. You are doing the works of your father. . . . The father from whom you are, is the devil, and the desires of your father it is your will to do" (8:37, 39-40, 44). They resolutely stiffen and close their ears to the word of Jesus when, at the end, replying to what they have just told Him, our Lord says to them: "Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham came to be, I am" (8:58). At that moment, the opposition is total. Jesus, in their opinion, has just blasphemed. "They therefore took up stones to cast at him" (8:59).

Thus, refusal of the truth of faith is often only the

consequence of the refusal of humbler truths, or of an interior stiffening, prior and more fundamental, which is at last revealed in an act of incredulity or total opposition to the Word of God. The implicit refusal of God sometimes begins with resistance to merely human truth and goodness. Conversely, the generous reception accorded to humble truths by a "pagan" can reveal his heart—at least to the eyes of God—and indicate a clear orientation toward the faith that would need only the word of the preacher to be activated (Rom. 10:14). Thus it is that one may speak of the "implicit faith" of certain "pagans" or nonbelievers. "Acting in the truth," they "come to the light" (cf. John 3:21). An example will illustrate this.

When Joseph and Mary arrived in Bethlehem for the census decreed by the Emperor Augustus, "there was no room for them in the inn" (Luke 2:7). Was this really the case, or was it a pretext on the part of the innkeeper? It seems astonishing that only because of a lack of space the town inn should have refused to receive a tired man and his pregnant wife when "the days for her to be delivered were fulfilled" (2:6). Many Christians, with perhaps somewhat hypocritical piety, blame these innkeepers who refused to make any extra effort to accommodate the Mother of God. Let us suppose, without judging the inn people any more than St. Luke permits us to do, that they could have made this extra effort and that a very ordinary and commonplace hospitality should have inclined them to do so—then, what of their refusal?

Did they know what they were really doing in throw-

ing out these two travellers whom they could have received? They did not know who Mary and Joseph were; and yet, they were really showing the door to the Mother of God and Jesus' foster father. Unquestionably if they had known them, they would have acted differently toward them. But even so, how would they have received them? Their action would have been different, but their hearts would have remained the hearts of people who receive Mary and Joseph only *because* they know who they are. Regardless of their actions, their hearts would have remained those of people who scorn the poor and receive the eminent.

Whoever welcomes any poor man at all, reveals that his heart is open, that it is receptive to the good, and, consequently, perhaps also to the divine good which is God. Whoever rejects a man, whoever scorns him, always runs the risk of refusing God, not only because, as in Bethlehem, it is really God who presents Himself, or because it may be an envoy of God (cf. Luke 9:5; Mark 6:11; Matt. 10:14), but also because he who rejects a man in any event manifests—at least beyond any reasonable excuse—an attitude of heart which is incompatible with the total adherence of faith.

Here is another example. If the Romans and Jews crucified Jesus, it was unquestionably because they did not know Him. If they had known Him, says St. Paul, "they would never have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. 2:8). On the last day, those responsible for this crime will perhaps be judged only according to what they knew—a man. But actually, the truth of Him whom they crucified shows that such a crime, killing a man, is

an unjustifiable rejection of him whom God gives us as outside of ourselves and who, consequently, is not at our disposal; to commit such an act, reveals an interior attitude of injustice, of hatred, of scorn, which exists or is latent in the invisible orientation of the heart even when the exterior act is not committed.

To stiffen oneself against these simple words of Jesus —"If you abide in my word, you shall be my disciples, indeed, and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32)—is to manifest a refusal of truth which, as the illustration shows, can be also a refusal of the Truth.

More examples could be offered, but none of them allow us to pass judgment on a particular welcome or refusal that we might notice. God alone probes the reins and the heart. We know only that accepting or refusing a man can mean much more than merely the acceptance or refusal of the man himself. The Acts of the Apostles furnish more examples of rejection, but they actually incline us not to judge, because we are not able to do so.

The Apostles, even if they are now saints, were not God and were not perfect. St. Peter demonstrated this very well during the Passion, and St. Paul retained all his life the memory of what he was before his conversion. The refusal, or at least the lack of confidence people felt upon hearing the Apostles, may therefore not always have stemmed from the rejection of the truth or from the lack of an open heart. The first preaching of Paul at Damascus did not benefit, one can readily understand, from a favorable prejudice regarding him (cf. Acts 9:21). Therefore, God alone can distinguish, in the incredulity

of an audience, what derives from a narrow heart or a false one, and what arises from a legitimate lack of confidence in a preacher whose life gives no compelling reasons for credibility. The fact is that these two motives do exist or can exist.

Thus the Word of God, in becoming a human word, suffers, in its own way[4] the fate of every human word. It is believed in for itself, but also because of the credibility communicated to it in some way by the one who speaks it or by the society of those of whom the speaker claims to be part. It is rejected because the one who hears it is wicked or because the organ which communicates it presents a formal countertestimony to it, preventing the hearer from truly hearing it for what it is. Certain painful facts from missionary history[5] could, unfortunately, illustrate this refusal to believe.

A man's fundamental attitude toward the Word, even if it is invisible to human eyes, nevertheless is revealed

[4] "In its own way." It is obviously the Holy Spirit who makes us see in the play of our relationships with him who brings It, the truth of the Word which comes from God. It is the Holy Spirit who makes us enter into the significance thereof and leads us through it toward the whole Truth (cf. John 14:26; 16:13, and allied texts).

[5] We are thinking, for example, of the refusal of certain Inca chiefs to receive Baptism because they did not want to become part of what appeared to them as a society of killers and perjurers. Cf. on this subject A. Roche, *Sur les traces de l'Évangile*, Mulhouse, Salvator, 1957, pp. 109 ff. In his treatise *De Indis* (1532), de Vitoria wrote concerning the Indians: "They would only be obliged to believe if the Christian faith were presented to them with testimony worthy of persuading them. Now, I do not understand that there have been any miracles among them, nor that any extraordinary examples of holiness have been given them. On the contrary, they have been presented with the spectacle of multiple scandals, of horrible crimes, of hardened impiety." Quoted by Ch. Journet, *op. cit.*, p. 338).

to the eyes of God, and is already proved in part by the behavior of the man toward all human words. The man's orientation toward the divine truth and goodness is revealed by his basic attitude toward humbler goods or truths where faith may very well be committed already. Thus it is that without having the right to attribute it to any particular man, we can conceive of the existence of an *implicit faith* in those who have not as yet heard the Gospel.

Eight

FAITH PRIOR TO THE WORD

The truth, as we have said, bears witness to itself. If a man upright in the sight of God, and searching for the truth through the grace of God, meets a preacher of the Gospel, he is usually ripe for receiving the Good News and thus will continue with greater confidence toward the total possession of Truth in heaven. But if he is not touched by the truth which he would normally be sensitive to in the evangelical words — if, for instance, he immediately judges that if God did exist, He should make Himself visible in some other way, some brilliant and spectacular way, which would make it impossible not to see Him — he reveals decisively, as we have said, the low esteem he has for the truth. Why should God not manifest the truth as He sees fit? Does the truth always need testimony other than itself? When the truth which is presented is God, what auxiliary testimony or extrinsic honors could man ask for besides the external grandeur surrounding the Truth? The Truth is sufficient unto itself.

No matter how little a man receives from his first hearing of the Gospel, enough truth comes from it to keep an upright heart from abandoning the divine message which has been communicated to it. No matter how little people may grasp of it at the outset, they must, if they are honest, admit that they have no reason for rejecting it. On the contrary, this mysterious truth for which they have been made must first alert them and

then put them into motion, making them search for it until they possess it fully. At that time they will receive the assurances which God does not refuse to simple hearts.

The upright man who does not hear this divine announcement about Jesus Christ, dead and risen for our salvation, is at least the kind of man who would listen if he did hear it. Of course it will be harder for him to keep this openness toward the true and the good without the signs of salvation instituted by Jesus Christ. But God concerns Himself with each man, and surely the Holy Spirit will give this man invisible but effective signs which will keep him in the right path.

In this regard St. Thomas teaches that every human being who has arrived at the age of reason is either in the state of grace or in the state of mortal sin. This can be affirmed without, of course, judging anyone. God alone knows those to whom He has given His grace and who have rejected it; He is the only one who knows when each person reaches the age of reason. But, as soon as this age is attained, man is, invisibly, according to St. Thomas' teaching, in the state of grace or in the state of sin. "If he [the human being at the age of reason] is really oriented toward the good end, grace will assure him the remission of original sin. So long as he is not oriented toward the good end insofar as he is capable of discerning it at that age, he will sin gravely by not doing everything which it is within him to do."[1] Initial personal sin can be remitted by grace, as St. Thomas points out a little further on in the same article, but the subsequent gift of grace will also correspond

[1] *Summa Theol.*, 1a, 2ae, 89, 6.

to a "conversion," that is, to a turning of the spirit toward its true end.

This doctrine is extremely important for mission theology. It indicates to us that the virtue of faith, which is given with grace, can exist in its beginnings in the heart of those who have not as yet heard the Gospel, in a rudimentary, imperfect way, completely implicit as compared to what it is in its perfection.

"The importance of this text," write M.-M. Labourdette and M.-J. Nicolas, "is extreme; it envisages as normal and inevitable the fact that, for the immense multitude of non-Christian children, *the choice between grace and sin is made before any encounter with the Catholic Church.* And it is not admissible that a truly sufficient grace is refused at the moment of this choice. Nor is it admissible that this justification occurs without faith. What kind of faith is this and what is its object?"[2]

This, indeed, is the crucial question.

We cannot bring in here the long dissertations that theologians such as A. Gardeil, R. Bernard, J. Maritain and others, have devoted to St. Thomas' text. We can, however, insist on two important points which have to do with our objective: the relationship of the faith of the nonbaptized person to the Church, and the possible form or content of his faith.[3]

The relationship of faith to the Church

First of all, what link exists between the faith which is involved in the first act of discernment by the non-

[2] "Théologie de l'apostolate missionnaire," in *Revue Thomiste,* Sept.-Dec. 1946, pp. 575-602 (p. 596).

[3] These problems were very well handled by J. Mouroux, "L'incroyant et le salut par la foi," in *Parole et Mission,* No. 4, Jan. 1959, pp. 34-53.

baptized person, and the Catholic Church? The authors quoted above simply state that "the choice between grace and sin is made . . . before any contact with the Catholic Church." This is certainly true as regards the human, visible encounter with "the Catholic Church" considered primarily as a visible society of men, or as a magisterium and doctrine easily transmittable and communicable to all. In that sense, a person can be justified in God's sight without being able to say that he "encountered" the Church which, as a matter of fact, he may never have seen with his eyes.

But there is another aspect of the mystery to be considered. The Church is the Body of Christ and no one can be justified or saved outside this Body. Where there is truly salvation, therefore, there is an attachment to this Body, even if this attachment to the visible Church is as yet invisible. There are not two Christs, nor two salvations, nor two Churches, nor two Baptisms. As soon as a man is justified, the grace of Christ has taken hold of him and usually leads him along, although still invisibly, to the Baptism of salvation, to the Church, to the fullness of explicit faith. This path will perhaps be difficult if no preacher of the faith presents himself, if the Catholic Church is not yet explicitly known; it may even be blocked, if the truth is not recognized among the witnesses of Christ in whose name the Gospel is announced. Still, the faith of the justified man is on the move. It tends continuously toward its goal: the beatific vision of the Truth which is God. Similarly, hope tends to rest in its object, which is the seizing of God, and charity tends unceasingly to go beyond itself. Vital dynamism is the internal law of faith, hope, and charity.

The encounter with the Catholic Church therefore, in God's mystery, comes at the precise moment of the "choice between grace and sin." The "Gentile" justified by God is, at that very moment, linked to the visible Church, though as yet only invisibly. He is also linked to Baptism, to which his being aspires as to its fullness, though he is not conscious of it. We do not speak of a transition from one divine economy to another — from the justification of the "Gentile" outside the sacramental signs of the Church and his sacramental life within the Church — but rather of progress and clarification within one and the same economy.

The "faith" of the nonbaptized

Our second point is that about which St. Thomas spoke, the mysterious beginning of the life of faith in the nonbaptized person who nevertheless is justified. What is this beginning? Where does it take place? How is it expressed? R. Bernard, commenting on the above-quoted text of St. Thomas, says this:

> It is something of infinite variety and extreme flexibility. Certain words of St. Thomas assume this. In this regard, it is clear that there is no common measure, so to speak, between the baptized child (who, moreover, is not the issue here, properly speaking), supplied with the sacraments of Christ, nourished in the bosom of the Church, formed by the saints, and the poor child who grows up in the arid terrain of a frightful spiritual desert. Usually, however, and, of course, with God's help, even the latter must leave himself open to the life of the spirit in accordance with his own capabilities and his lights. And, if he shows himself to be receptive to the great divine friendship which is offered to him, often at much closer range than we might

believe, and which already beckons him, if he is docile to the divine advances which are made to him, then St. Thomas tells us what happens. Some people are amazed that these first acts, if they are so important and so decisive, do not leave any special traces in the memory and, most of the time, are not even distinctly recognizable. This is because, in reality, we must not believe that these initial reflexes and decisions of the awakening soul are something sudden and sensational. On the contrary, they generally assume a more or less lengthy evolution and a sort of secret progress of the soul through its own sensibility. This does not preclude sudden illuminations or privileged moments of growth the memory of which can remain vividly for a long time.[4]

In a pertinent and very acute analysis, here is the way J. Maritain, in his turn, describes this initial act of liberty in the child:

He does not make any discursive deliberations, he takes himself in hand, he liberates or delivers his inmost self from the abyss of determinism where he has up to that moment lived, he emerges into the moral life by freely deciding on the direction of his life. At the root of such an act is self-reflection, produced in the intellect and responding to the question: why are you living? But this reflection is not explicitly indicated to the spirit, nor is it formulated in clearly-defined conceptual terms. On the contrary, it is developed in a choice whose immediate object may be a trifle, a nothing, but in which a spiritual vitality is engaged, a decisive gravity, a gift of self the fulness of which adulthood will rediscover only on rare and miraculous occasions. *Puerile decus.* We tell them not to play with fire. They play with God.[5]

[4] R. Bernard, O.P., *Le péché,* vol. III, coll. "Somme théologique," Paris, Cerf, pp. 318-319.

[5] "La dialectique immanente du premier acte de liberté," in *Nova et Vetera,* 1945, No. 3, pp. 218-235 (p. 219).

Such an act, according to Maritain, does not procure a speculative and conscious knowledge of God, but rather a "non-conceptual knowledge, immediately involved in life, whose truth is judged *per conformitatem ad appetitum rectum*" (according to its conformity to a right appetite). This is what Maritain calls "volitional knowledge." According to him, this knowledge is neither explicit, since it is not conceptual, nor implicit either, because it is actually exercised and attains the object to be known in itself and not in some other thing which contains it.

This important and enlightening distinction should be noted. However, the following critique could be made: Is the transition from implicit to explicit only movement from the container to the contained, and not also movement from the obscure to the clear, from the unconscious to the conscious? Whatever answer may be given to this question, however, we will hold to the idea that the non-baptized can have faith, by the grace of God, in two ways: first of all, they have faith who, without ever having heard of Jesus Christ, nevertheless believe in God, hope in Him, have confidence that God is good and that He rewards the good (cf. Heb. 11:6). Their faith is truly implicit,[6] so long as it at least does not contain anything contrary to this foundation set forth by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Their spirit is therefore usually quite ready to receive the Word of salvation which the preacher will bring. It implicitly awaits the Word.

[6] Just as their "baptism," called Baptism of the spirit or Baptism of penance, (cf. *Summa Theol.*, 3a, 66, 11, c), involves the desire (implicit) for the Baptism of water.

Those, too, who, by the grace of God, though not capable of making any act of faith in God, are nevertheless completely oriented to the good and to the truth which is the good of the intellect, unquestionably have the faith. Their youth, their upbringing, their ignorance, may prevent them from seeing clearly any great distance. But the momentum of their will carries them farther than they realize. Quite simply, they live in the truth. They are good, and are completely oriented toward the good in all its fullness. Thus we can speak of the possibility of "faith" for them, a faith which can scarcely be called implicit and which, being quite without the sacramental helps, is in itself rather fragile.

What we can say about the conditions and possibilities for faith in these two groups is one thing, a specific application of these conditions is quite another. We must insist again on our general inability to make a positive judgment as to any particular man. Judgment belongs to God. We can set forth the conditions according to which an orientation of faith is possible. It is only with difficulty, to say the least, that we can state that, in this or that case, the conditions apply.

It is obvious from all this, that, in going to pagans, the missionary is not encountering, in an absolute sense, a world which God has never visited.[7] If he runs into

[7] This is all the more true if he does not go to "pagans." Father L. Bouyer noted recently that the "worst heretics can have some very important truths to tell us, truths which it suffices to place in a Catholic context for their full value to be appreciated." In this regard, he calls on the authority of Pope Clement VIII, who exclaimed, after having read a part of *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* by the Anglican Richard Hooker: "There is no discipline that this man has not made more profound, there is nothing too difficult for his understanding. Surely, this man deserves the name of author; his books will be more and more

upright souls searching for the truth and desiring the good, he is perhaps meeting invisible disciples, not aware of being such, of Him who is the Truth. It also has been said of the missionary that he represents the Church going forth to meet the Church. This, of course, must be understood, not in the sense that there are two Churches, but in the sense that the Church goes forth to meet those who are attached to her without as yet being aware of it, and without as yet having received the help of her ministers, to which they are nonetheless entitled.

However, it remains true that this is a delicate task. False testimony on the part of the missionary can lead those in good faith away from the true Way which is Jesus Christ. Once made, this wrong turn is corrected only with difficulty. From another viewpoint, it is true — though this does not make up for such misfortunes —

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respected as the ages go by, for there is in them such a sowing of eternity that if the rest is like that, it will last until the final fire that will consume every science that can be taught" (cf. L. Bouyer, *La vie de la liturgie,* Cerf, 1956, p. 64).

Pope Gregory VII, receiving in Rome an ambassadorial mission from the Moslem king of Mauritania, declared with respect to this king: "We pray God from the bottom of our heart to receive you after a long life into the bosom of the blessedness of the most holy patriarch Abraham" (quoted in *Theology Library,* Fides, Vol. V, 1958, p. 407). Besides, does not the Church honor the pagan Wise Men, the first fruits of the "Nations," who recognized Christ; Melchisedech, the King of Salem, to whom Abraham "gave . . . a tenth of everything" (Gen. 14:20); the Roman centurion in Matthew 8:10; the woman who was a "Gentile, a Syrophoenician by birth" in Mark 7:26; the centurion Cornelius, Pilate's wife (Matt. 27:19); etc.? In his radio message to Ernakulam, Pius XII said to Indian Catholics: "Show forth clearly that everything which is true and good in other religions finds its profound significance and its perfect completion in Christ" (Radio message of Dec. 31, 1952, *A.A.S.,* vol. XLV).

that many souls which were in error or in sin can, on hearing the Word of salvation, be awakened from their torpor and believe explicitly, finally, when in the beginning one could not even speak of "implicit faith" or of orientation to faith, with regard to them. It is especially for the sake of the many people in this latter group that the external testimonies of miracles or of martyrdom must lend a strong helping hand to the Word.

Nine

MIRACLES AND SIGNS

Miracles are linked to the Word which announces salvation, in order to confirm the latter. The theology of miracles is therefore an integral part of a missionary theology. God does not work miracles through one or another of His intermediaries, in order to give scholars occasions for discussion, but to kindle faith, or to awaken a sleeping faith and to confirm it.

Also, we see that miracles are more frequent at the beginning of the mission, particularly at the first such beginning, when God sent His Son to announce salvation to us and to save us in actual fact. Miracles mark the course of Jesus' preaching. So too, after the Ascension and Pentecost, miracles, though less numerous, accompany the preaching of Peter, of Paul, and of the Apostles.

The Church has now been established and, though miracles are more rare, they are never lacking — especially when the Church begins her mission in any specific part of the globe — to confirm the Word of Truth borne by the Church. It would be interesting to pursue the history of local Churches, noting the miracles which very often accompanied their founding. How many dioceses piously treasure the story of the miracles of their holy founder! Miracles have never ceased, as we could observe from the beginnings of Churches in the pagan regions of Asia and Africa in recent times. To give only one example, we might recall the recent history of the founding of the Church among the Dagari tribe of West Africa. This was a tribe ministered to by the White

Fathers. The latter had accomplished little and were waiting to see what God would do with the situation, when a terrible drought began that threatened to devastate the region.

Fear caused a revival of pagan practices, a new fervor in their celebration, and a rash of activity on the part of sorcerers who, profiting from the confidence people placed in them, could satisfy their appetites and perhaps their resentments by outrageous demands. The days passed and the drought continued. Finally the superior of the mission, a Canadian White Father, Father McCoy, who had made a spectacular cure of a dying man by means of an injection of caffeine, was approached by the council of the elders. They begged him to put his mysterious force at the service of the country. The Father accepted. He had them enter the mud chapel, made them kneel and promise to follow his Way if their prayers were heard, and began a long prayer in front of them. During this prayer, there gradually appeared in the leaden sky which had been absolutely clear for so many months, some clouds which slowly became larger. At the end of the prayer, the rain came down in torrents. On several occasions, prayer was heard in like manner. This was in September, 1931. It was the beginning of a mass conversion.[1] We can use the word "conversion" because all those pagans had "returned" and cleaved to the true God. Still, they knew practically nothing except that the God to whom they cleaved was the God of the White Fathers and that He was All-powerful.

[1] Cf. C. Le Sourd, *Un peuple en marche vers la lumière, les Dagaris*, Impr. de l'Argus, Soissons (n.d.).

The shock of conversion

The goal of the mission, in the strictest sense, is not primarily to instruct — though this is essential and will be examined later — nor to develop a doctrine of faith; it is to convert, to "turn" the hearts of the hearers. This is what Peter and the Apostles, and soon afterwards Paul, did after Pentecost. St. Luke tells us that after a brief sermon by Peter who, in front of the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, had just miraculously cured a lame man, "many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to be five thousand" (Acts 4:4). A little later on, St. Luke sums up the picture of the primitive Church, when he writes: "Now by the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people . . . and the multitude of men and women who believed in the Lord increased still more" (Acts 5:12, 14).

If the immediate goal of the mission is not to develop a doctrine, but to convert, then the question of adaptation, whether in the language, doctrine, or customs and rites, is a secondary, even premature one for this stage. The initial announcement of the message does not, primarily, demand adaptation to the way of life of those among whom one has come, but, on the contrary, creates a sort of rupture in that way of life, that is to say, provokes a spiritual shock which breaks the attachment of men to their pagan beliefs and customs, to their sin or unbelief.

Miracles usually create this type of salutary shock. In the presence of such an unusual event, the spirit of unbelief, at least if it is sincere, loses its security. Without having any evidence, since even in the case of mira-

cles we do not leave the domain of faith, the spirit asks questions and the Word, along with grace, can at that moment penetrate barriers hitherto considered impassable.

What is true of miracles can also be true of less imposing events. Those rationally inclined individuals who make it their business to find a natural explanation for every miracle presented to them, are sometimes touched by more modest, or, rather, less obvious facts: an act of humility by an apostle, the generous and modest life of a priest, the joy of a Christian family. Many are touched by the faithfully practiced celibacy of a priest, something they had previously not believed in. God uses everything, and He alone knows what touches souls. Sometimes it is a particular phrase in a sermon, to which the preacher attached no importance at all. And what profoundly affects the life of one man can leave many others indifferent. The homily which the future St. Anthony heard and which led him to decide to sell all his possessions, to leave everything behind and spend the rest of his life in the solitude of the desert, apparently affected no one but him.

But while God makes use of all things, we may not conclude therefrom that everything without distinction can speak of God to anyone at all and at any times. Every event can become a sign of God for the man to whom God reveals His helping hand through this event; the world can at any moment become transparent for the man whom God leads through history to perceive His divine intentions and His design. But there are events and acts that constitute privileged signs.

Such are, first of all, the "signs" which Jesus Himself

gives of His mission as the prophet, the spokesman of God: the miracle at Cana, "the first of his signs," St. John tells us (2:11); the multiplication of the loaves (John 6:14); the curing of the man born blind, which caused the Pharisees to exclaim: "How can a man who is a sinner work these signs?" (John 9:16). Though everyone does not perceive these signs, especially those who seek them not to be converted but rather to see and to judge (Matt. 12:38; 16:4; Mark 8:11-12), it is such signs which draw the crowds to Jesus (John 6:2).

Also privileged are the events which the prophet, or the evangelist, himself perceives as the signs of a manifest design of God. Thus it is that St. John "sees," among other things, the history of Jesus against the background of the story of Moses and the Exodus; the well of Jacob evokes the importance of water in the itinerary of the people of the Exodus (Ex. 15:22-27; 17:1-7) and the role it will play as the symbol of the life which God gives (Is. 12:3; 55:1; Jer. 2:13; Ezech. 47:1ff., etc.); the multiplication of the loaves constantly recalls the gift of manna and sheds light on that event; the passover of Jesus, evoked as a "passing" (John 13:1), recalls the "passage" through the Red Sea (Ex. 14); the elevation of Jesus on the Cross calls to mind the elevation of the serpent in the desert by Moses (John 3:14). But there are many other signs. For St. John, nearly all the events in the life of Jesus are not only facts but signs, and he reveals their significance. Jesus Himself appears as the Sign par excellence, for which the sending of the manna in the desert prepared men's minds: "I am" (cf. Ex. 3: 14), He says, "the bread of life" (John 6:35).

Finally, in the Church, the sign of charity and unity

is a privileged one: "By this will all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35). Fraternal love will be for righteous hearts the sign by which the Master of the "disciples," that is, God Himself, is recognized. God, who is love, is revealed in this love of the disciples for one another, as Jesus loved them (cf. John 15:12). This is the great sign of the New Covenant. It is also "the new commandment" (John 13:34). It is, or should be, for the unbeliever, the startling event which finally reveals the God of love and leads to belief in Him. Every Christian community must display this sign. If it is lacking, Christians bear their share of responsibility for the unbelief which remains around them.

Besides this privileged and to some degree institutional sign — to which should be added the fact that the poor themselves receive the Good News (Matt. 11:6)[2] — there are many other possible signs. The apostle led by the spirit of Jesus takes advantage of every occasion to show God's direction of the world. In doing this he follows the example of Jesus, who drew providential lessons for His hearers from such disturbing events as the massacre of certain Galileans by Pilate (Luke 13:1), the accident at the Tower of Siloe, whose fall caused the death of eighteen persons (Luke 13:4), the fact of a man born blind (John 9:3). The missionary must profit similarly by every occasion,[3] especially those which, in the Spirit

[2] Which also means that whenever the poor are *not* entering the Church, a sign is sadly lacking that would enable her to be recognized for what she is, the messianic people announced by Isaias (29:19), and Christians must bear the responsibility for this.

[3] On this subject, read the beautiful testimonial of D. Ponsot, "De la difficulté de présenter la Parole de Dieu en milieu païen," in *Parole et Mission,* No. 4, Jan. 59, pp. 80-91.

of God, seem to him to be particularly suited for touching men's souls. He is by profession the one who makes God speak from within events, within history, within every human life, for those who have ears to hear yet do not hear, eyes to see yet do not see.

Regardless of the kind of sign involved, conversion, whether it be the conversion of the nonbeliever or of the sinner, or the "conversion," in the ancient sense of this term, of the person who abandons everything to become a monk, demands a change of mind and a decision which often correspond to an interior upheaval. This event need not be spectacular, but can be so. It can also be neither visible nor palpable, so long as it touches the heart of the one being converted. The unusual nature of such an event is not seen by worldly eyes, and the apostle, if he were nothing more than an eccentric, would turn souls away from the Word he brings rather than incline them to hear it. No matter what it is that is visible and palpable to the senses and made use of by God, that which speaks to the heart of the one being converted is of another order. But to speak to the heart of the nonbeliever or of the sinner, it is often necessary to speak "loudly," that is, not by raising one's voice but by speaking with the persuasiveness of the faith and by accompanying one's words with the testimony of that which is capable of confirming the words.

Perhaps it was his excessive concern for adaptation at this initial stage that made St. Paul so ineffectual in the Areopagus of Athens (Acts 17:16ff.). Profiting from this lesson, in Corinth he no longer feared to speak "the doctrine of the cross" (1 Cor. 1:18), which is "foolishness" to all those who hear it — the Jews "who ask for

signs" and the Greeks, who look for "wisdom." "We, for our part," he says, "preach a crucified Christ — to the Jews indeed a stumbling-block and to the Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (1 Cor. 1: 23-25). The shock of this discourse, which was a far cry from "pretentious speech or wisdom" (1 Cor. 2:1), and which Paul still pronounced "in weakness and in fear and in much trembling" (1 Cor. 2:3), produced, in the power of the Spirit, excellent results.

Adaptation

Let us not be too quick to draw from all this the conclusion that the missionary must never concern himself with adaptation. On the contrary, a certain adaptation in customs, language, and behavior, is sometimes necessary in order not to create any misunderstanding. There is no question of bringing people to abandon their way of life, if it is compatible with the generous life of faith. In order to avoid confusing people as to what the missionary is asking them in the name of God, a prior adaptation to their way of life may very well be useful. Still, this is of secondary importance. Both the obstinate refusal to adopt the language and the legitimate customs of those to whom one is speaking, and the systematic practice of adaptation in everything, even to the smallest details of dress, are foolish attitudes for the missionary who comes to announce the Word of salvation to nonbelievers. The refusal to adapt makes the message inaudible and alien to those to whom one is bringing it;

minute and systematic adaptation in all points renders less clear the main concern of the missionary, which is to bring the Truth of salvation. The essential thing is for the missionary to have this one preoccupation: to announce the Truth that God has communicated to us for our salvation. The love of this Truth, crucified for us, with an inseparable love of souls, will then dictate the attitude to be assumed.

Returning to the miracle, or, more generally, to the event which is capable of touching rebellious hearts and "shocking" them in the Holy Spirit, it is through this event that the hand of God is invisibly perceived and that nonbelievers accede to the Truth of the faith in the Church. The Word, confirmed by the testimony, "is able to build up and to give the inheritance among all the sanctified" (Acts 20:32).

Miracles in Christian life

Once the Church has been built up, the faith of the people is not always of such stability or of such clear memory that it does not occasionally need some new and striking testimonials. Of course, the interior eye of the believer, in the measure in which his faith deepens, is more and more sensitive to the spiritual works of God. And the testimony of a saint is often more stimulating to him, more constructive, on the basis of the faith already received, than the external spectacle of a miraculous cure. Still, God alone knows what is best for each. Believers cannot scorn those signs in which they recognize the omnipotent hand of their Father. But some need them more than others to awaken their dormant faith — and no one can, without presumption, say of himself

that he no longer needs them. It is God who gives faith. And it is also God who awakens it when it has fallen asleep, or has weakened, or no longer offers "the works of faith" (Jas. 2:14). This is why God who leads us by His Providence, continues to produce His signs in the midst of believers.

It is, therefore, altogether remarkable that miracles in our midst often have no relation with any particular human being, but with a place and a community. Such is the case, for instance, with places of pilgrimage, privileged sanctuaries, and, in particular, Lourdes. God has so manifested Himself in such places, or in such and such a church in such places, that people go to them in order to receive in some unpredictable way that is pleasing to God, a visitation by God. Ordinarily, then, God does not gather people around a particular person, but brings them to a church, a sanctuary, a community where each must enter or become a member in order to be visited by God.

And so even miracles are not without their relationship to the community; either they build it up, if they are meant to confirm the initial word of the missionary, or they sustain it in the faith it has already received, or they seem to proceed so naturally from the community that even the nonbelievers who are looking for God come to seek signs of Him there.

Ten

MARTYRDOM

The fact that persecution and martyrdom are part and parcel of the expansion of the faith and the fecundity of the Church is paradoxical only if one starts by eliminating the Cross from the Gospel, that is, by suppressing the faith. Jesus, "the faithful witness" (Apoc. 1:5), wished to give His supreme testimony by His death on the Cross. The disciple is not above his Master. It is the Passion of the Church which causes the Church to appear as "a sign that shall be contradicted . . . that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed" (Luke 2:34-35). It is then that "those who do not see may see and they who see may become blind" (John 9:39). Those who see are those who think they see, the self-sufficient who, in the end, prove that they "loved the darkness rather than the light, for their works were evil" (John 3:19). The Cross, like martyrdom, effects, through God, the discernment of spirits.

However, St. Luke shows us another reason why persecution is fruitful for the Church. Through persecution the Church is dispersed. Exiled believers will immediately create new Churches which, when they are persecuted, will again disperse and in turn create more new ones. . . . Thus it is that "the general persecution in Jerusalem was directly responsible for the two great phases of the Church's expansion: the dispersed Chris-

tians evangelized Samaria (Acts 8:4) then Antioch (*id.* 11:19-21)."[1]

This providential manner in which the faith of the Church spread over the universe is not, however, the only fact which established martyrdom institutionally, so to speak, in the life of the Church. The Lord Himself prophesied: "Behold, I send you forth as lambs in the midst of wolves" (Luke 10:3). And if there are wolves, then it may be said that "the paschal mystery of death and resurrection can only be presented validly if it is simultaneously lived by the heralds who proclaim it. Persecution is not merely an historical fact, it is an internal necessity of Christ's body."[2] From this stems the immense desire for martyrdom which is found in all epochs of the Church's life. It was particularly keen during the earliest centuries, and the Roman Martyrology has recorded the names of many Christian men and women who ran to the place of their martyrdom as to their greatest joy. St. Ignatius of Antioch rejected the suppliant prayers of those who wanted to prevent him from pursuing his course or at least delay his martyrdom. He could hear another voice and would brook no delay. Even "if the beasts do not want to come to me," he cried, "I will force them, I will place myself before them to be devoured. Pardon me, my children, for I know what is best for me." St. Gorgonius and his companions suffer to see one of them receive the crown of martyrdom while they themselves are ignored. They throw them-

[1] Cf. P. Guilbert and J. Hamaide, *op. cit.*, p. 109. One can follow the persecution-expansion dialectic of the Church in this excellent presentation of the Acts.

[2] *Id.*, pp. 109-110.

selves at the feet of the Emperor, who did not know they were Christians, and beg him to throw them to the beasts: "Why," they say, "punish only that man, since we deserve to be condemned like him?" As for certain virgins, martyrdom is for them a joyous wedding day on which the Divine Spouse comes to take them into His home. Thus, the Church exclaims: "O Lucy, Spouse of Christ!" several times on the feast of the Virgin of Syracuse. "Hail, Catherine, pearl of virgins; hail, glorious spouse of the King of kings," she also sings in celebrating the feast of the martyr of Alexandria. The desire and joy of martyrdom so thoroughly overcome the fear and darkness of death that we see a St. Apollonia "deliberate within herself for an instant and then, suddenly tearing herself out of the hands of the brigands, throw herself into the fire, already consumed interiorly by the more ardent flame of the Holy Spirit" (Roman Martyrology, February 9).

Whence came this desire of suffering death for Christ? Surely from the desire "to be with Christ" definitively in heaven, but also from the desire to imitate Him beforehand in His passion, that is, to be completely configured to His death in order to rise again with Him, or rather from the desire that the death of Christ be prolonged somehow in the blood of the martyr so that His resurrection might also touch the martyr.[3] The

[3] On this subject, read the excellent article by Msgr. M. Pellegrino, "L'imitation du Christ dans les actes des martyrs," in *La Vie Spirituelle,* Jan. 1958, pp. 38-54. Msgr. Pellegrino gives an admirable exposition of the ideal of the martyr, who was to reproduce the martyrdom of Christ not only in spirit, but also, as much as possible, in the letter, that is, by finding a sign or an allusion to the Passion in all the new circumstances of his own passion.

ideal of Christian happiness and sanctity in the early centuries was martyrdom. All the martyrs were considered blessed. Martyrdom was for them the sacramental sign, both symbolic and efficacious, of the passion of Christ which, in all certitude, was to open the gates of heaven to them. It is as if the blood they were shedding had become the blood of Christ the Savior and in this blood they immediately found life anew.

But while the thirst for martyrdom was so keen in the first centuries, it would be unjust to overlook the following times—and to omit the defections of the early centuries about which history is less eloquent. During the entire later Middle Ages, monks roamed Europe animated with the desire of fleeing their families and their country to go to meet Christ in a foreign land, where perhaps one day they would receive the crown of martyrdom. This desire, somehow mystical and purely disinterested, nevertheless had a tremendous apostolic effectiveness.[4]

In the thirteenth century, the life of a Raymond Lully, who was zealous in the apostolate, is completely shot through with the thirst for martyrdom. Not that he knew no fear as he dreamed of leaving for the lands of Islam where God was calling him, but he was afraid only until "he reminded himself of the City of his Beloved, the gateway and entrance to which are death and love."[5] According to Lully the act of shedding one's

[4] Cf. on this subject the very interesting work by V. Campenhausen, "Asketische Heimatlosigkeit," in *Sammlung Gemeinverständlicher Vorträge,* No. 149, 1930, J C. B. Mohl (Paul Siebeck), Tubingen.

[5] *Livre de l'Ami et de l'Aimé,* quoted by R. Sugranyes de Franch, *Raymond Lulle, docteur des missions,* Ed. de la *Nouvelle Rev. de Sc. miss.,* 1954, p. 22.

blood in testimony to the faith has "an exemplary value which is essential to the propagation of the faith. [He] would at all times require the missionary to be prepared to give himself as the seed of Christians."[6] To be prepared is perhaps even an understatement; in the schools for missionaries that Lully wished to establish, he "provided that, each week, a sermon should be preached on this subject to the religious so that they might desire to die with greater ardor."[7] This desire for martyrdom seemed to him to be essential for the missionary. He even went further and decreed that in children's classrooms "the pupils also be prepared for the knowledge of the languages of the infidels, and the desire of dying for Christ will be inculcated in them."[8] No missiologist, it would seem, has thrown into greater relief the beauty, the role, and the efficacy of martyrdom in the economy of the missions.

Other testimonies to the Cross

It will be said, of course, that the soul's configuration to the crucified and risen Christ takes place at Baptism. This is true. Baptism's role is to assimilate the Christian to Christ dead and risen, and it is because he is like his Savior that every Christian must "lose his life" if he wants to gain it (Luke 9:24), to die if he wants to live. Regardless of the events and the outcome of life, the essence of what Baptism effects, or even martyrdom itself, is actually, though invisibly, in the heart of the Christian who lives by his faith and by his love of Christ.

[6] Sugranyes de Franch, *op. cit.*, p. 74.
[7] *Blanquerna,* quoted by Sugranyes de Franch, *op. cit.*, p. 115.
[8] *Traité sur la manière de convertir les infidèles,* id., p. 135.

The essence of what Baptism accomplishes is invisible. Still, it would be quite illusory and even foolish to think that the essence could subsist invisibly without ever revealing itself exteriorly or without ever being helped and sustained by external actions. "Show me thy faith without works," St. James exclaims, "and I from my works will show thee my faith" (Jas. 2:18). We could say, paraphrasing a little: "How can you show the death of Christ effected in you by your Baptism, without showing the works of this death which are conversion, mortification, renunciation, and sacrifice—even, if God asks it, unto the sacrifice of your life?" The interior death effected by Baptism ordinarily retains its complete meaning with respect to the cross of Christ, as well as its efficacy, only through the external crosses which God, in His providential arrangements, never fails to reserve to His Church and to Christians, or to inspire them to accept. Thus, the cross of Christ, remaining in our thoughts and hearts, as well as, on occasion, at the crossroads of the invisible suffering of the body, bears its witness. It is not unusual to see the Church fill up in her flesh "what is lacking of the sufferings of Christ" (Col. 1:24).

Martyrdom, therefore, is not the only possible testimony—the cross of Christ can be manifested in many ways. Martyrdom nevertheless affords the strongest testimony, and the history of the Church from her origins down to our own day is eloquent on this subject. It shows us the effectiveness of the martyr's witness, through the grace of God, for the gaining of souls, and, at the same time, the lasting fruitfulness of Christian communities whose origins were red with the blood of martyrs.

After the atrocious persecutions in Japan in the sixteenth century, and after the pitiless repression which followed, it would have seemed impossible for a single Christian to be left in Japan. The discovery of an ancient community of Christians on March 17, 1865, remains, in this regard, one of the most stirring events in the history of the missions. The Japanese soil where the Christian seed was sown may have been violently ploughed up, but it nonetheless bore fruit down to our own times, despite the initial difficulty experienced by the clandestine Christians in recognizing, on the day of their liberation, the ancient Catholic Church, the Church of their ancestors.

Still more eloquent perhaps is the history of Viet Nam, which takes pride in being "the Church's eldest daughter in Asia." Yet the Church in this country hardly ever ceased to undergo severe persecution for three centuries. It is permissible to see a connection between this persecution and the flowering of divine grace. The magnificent epic of Uganda's Christianity should be mentioned for similar reasons. The following is the brief account given of it by its latest historian, Father Bouchard:

> On February 17, 1879, Father Lourdet and his companions reached the capital of the kingdom of Uganda. That year, three missionaries were assassinated, but nine others relieved them. As of 1880, sixteen court pages had been baptized, and there were sixteen more in 1881. On their return, in 1885, they learned that their first Christians had baptized 177 of their compatriots and prepared 600 catechumens. It was then that the hatred of the prime minister unleashed a persecution that claimed 80 martyrs. The latter evidenced a superhuman courage in the midst of the most cruel torments; 22 of them, including 13 young pages who were

burned alive, were beatified in 1920. The blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians. In 1886, the Christians numbered 4,000, and this in spite of two new persecutions, one of them launched by the Muslims in 1888, and the other by the Protestants in 1892-93. Uganda by this time had 50,000 Catholics, and, by now, can count 1,473,000, ministered to by 559 priests of whom 181 are indigenous clergy. The Hierarchy was established in 1953 in this "Pearl of the African Missions."[9]

In some countries there has been, of course, less encouraging testimony. Regardless of where the blame for it should be laid, Sweden, for example, went over to Protestantism unprotestingly, without giving up a single martyr. It is also a fact that religion is barely alive in Sweden today, with Catholicism's rate of progress there one of the slowest for any place in the world. We should not hasten to draw conclusions from these facts, but we should concern ourselves with the questions they raise. There is no implication, needless to say, that there are not, or have not been, saintly Christians in Sweden.

While the testimony of martyrdom is convincing, it does not follow that it is the only possible and necessary one. Every testimony of "patience" in Christ, no matter what the suffering that sets this patience in operation, causes the cross of Christ to shine brilliantly among Christians, and causes a discernment of spirits among others, bringing new converts to the Church. The many Christians who after the persecutions in the Roman Empire during the fourth and fifth centuries, went into the deserts to live the life of "athletes of Christ," of

[9] J. Bouchaud, C.S.Sp., "Les missions d'Afrique," p. 332, in *Histoire Universelle des missions catholiques,* Paris, Libr. Grund, 1958, vol. III.

"soldiers of Christ," of "ascetics," understood this. Thus, monasticism presented itself as the necessary adjunct of martyrdom.[10] Mortification and the "confession of faith" were never to be lacking in the Church, whether during periods of crisis or during periods of "peace" and "secularization."

Although these qualities were never lacking in the Church, have they sometimes been absent from mission territories? The question arises because Pius XI, in his encyclical *Rerum Ecclesiae,* in 1926, which gave missionary activity a new departure, pointedly invited the superiors of contemplative orders to found houses in mission lands. After giving the example of the Trappist monastery of the Peking Vicariate, he wrote:

> This shows . . . how our monks, while keeping intact the rule and spirit of their founder, without carrying on any exterior activity, can bring each day considerable aid to the advancement of your apostolate. This is why the superiors of contemplative orders, if they listened to your prayers by founding communities in locations which you would select together, would be performing a work of great value for the immense masses of pagans, a work which would please Us beyond words.

Though it comes late, it seems indeed—and it is to be hoped—that the "hour of the monks" has finally struck in the missions. The new Trappist abbeys in Africa and Japan, the Benedictine establishments in Morocco, Ruanda, Madagascar, Kerala, Viet Nam, are perhaps the signal. Monasteries are ordinarily the places where the

[10] This was remarkably demonstrated by Dom A. Stolz, in his chapter "L'ascète martyr," in his excellent book *"L'Ascèse chrétienne,"* Chevetogne, 1948.

faith and Christian witness[11] shine the brightest, and the Church must spread such places everywhere. The word unsupported by any testimony of faith would be vain and useless.

Martyrdom, an act of the Church

Martyrdom itself, no matter how individual an act it may be, is also an act of the Church, or of the entire local community. Martyrdom is, as it were, the fruit of the Christian community. The faith of the community sustains the faith of the future witness; it upholds his courage, stimulates his fervor. Without their communities, Christians often would not have been noticed, and perhaps none of them would have attracted the hostility of persecution. Without his community, the persecuted Christian would perhaps not have held on to the end. We see, in fact, "in many *Acts* of martyrs, that the community comforted the elect at the moment of suffering."[12] Martyrdom is linked to the community, "it emanates from it, it draws down upon it the malediction of men and the benediction of God. Later on, men will say that the blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians, that is, of Christian communities."[13]

The Church, because she works by her presence a discernment of spirits, causes conversions, and simultaneously attracts opposition, the most violent form of which is persecution. A Church that no longer accom-

[11] Cf., on this subject, the request by Dom P. C. Lou Tseng-Tsiang for the founding of monasteries in China, in *Souvenirs et pensées,* Paris, Cerf, 1948, pp. 113-117.

[12] Rousseau, "Communauté ecclésiale et communauté monastique," in *La Maison-Dieu,* 51, 1957, pp. 10-30, pp. 14-15.

[13] *Id.*

plishes conversions no longer attracts opposition; a Church that no longer attracts opposition generally does not make many conversions. In this world of sin in which we live, the Church is the sign of contradiction, and those whom she brings together she unites at the same time in the resurrection and the cross of Christ, which is salvation.

Need we add that this opposition to the Church, or the opposition which the Church puts herself in, does not take place on the level of political, social, or cultural affairs? It is opposition by the world or opposition to the world as regards what is evil in the latter, or as regards what, in it, is subject to the power of Satan, the prince of this world. He it is who, with his satellites, "crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. 2:8). It is they, too, who are opposed to the Church. In the face of these two opponents, we reveal what we are.

Eleven

THE DURATION OF THE MISSION

Whether we define missionary activity, at least on a provisional basis, as that activity which consists in establishing the Church in a given location, or as that activity which consists in preparing the way for faith in hearts and communicating this faith by the Word of salvation, our definition is valid only if the terms "Church" and "faith" are both understood precisely. When does the Church begin? At what moment do we fix the origin of faith in a soul? What we have already said of the possible extension of grace even before the moment when the sacramental signs which express it and communicate it in the Church have been presented,[1] of the possibility of a beginning of faith and consequently of a faith which is already real, in the nonbaptized, of the ability of the Word to influence over

[1] It has been said of mission theology that it can be summed up as a theology of *vota* and *obices*, (*desires* and *obstacles*). A case can be made for this view. It amounts to saying, for example, that the causality of Baptism is not limited to the very instant when it is administered. It can go beyond this moment, either beforehand, when the pagan becomes a convert and, by entering the catechumenate orients himself (*votum:* baptism of desire) to Baptism, or afterward, when the sinner who did not renounce his sin at the moment of his Baptism and thereby placed an obstacle (*obex*) to the sacrament, later undergoes conversion. The sacramental sign of Baptism is nevertheless the moment which consecrates the progress of grace in the soul of the catechumen from the time of his conversion, or which reserves for the future convert this outlet to the merciful grace of Christ of which his conversion is the fruit. Baptism is also the moment at which, normally, faith best expresses itself; it is the moment which is either the end of the believer's quest for Christ, or, for the late convert, the beginning of the return to Him and His ways.

and above the apparently less than satisfactory responses which certain people seem to make to it, shows us from the outset the sense and import of these questions.

Answering these questions, however, does not suffice to define the mission. Missionary activity risks being intellectually incomprehensible unless its term can be fixed: At what moment does the mission end? When can the Church be said to be implanted? When is faith assured in the souls which have received it? We must also reply to this second series of questions.

The beginning of the mission

Without taking into consideration once again the terms "faith" and "Church," which are implied in any definition of the mission, the expression "beginning of the mission" is itself already an ambiguous expression. There is a "beginning of the mission" when the first missionary arrives in a country. But it may be that conversions do not coincide with this arrival and are long delayed. It will then be proper to speak of a "beginning of the mission" in a new sense, when the first candidate asks to be prepared for Baptism; indeed, everything begins that day for the country to which the missionary has been sent. It may also happen that there are Christians in a country before the first missionary *sent* arrives there. This was the case in Korea, where certain "sages" in the seventeenth century, having heard of the Christians at the court of Peking, had brought to them in great secrecy, by some voyagers and merchants, their Christian books. Thus there was already a whole community of believers when a Chinese priest named Cheu, sent by Msgr. Gouvea, Bishop of

Peking, arrived in 1794.[2] It can also happen, finally, that the "mission" is understood in the sense that it signifies a community and that the "beginning of the mission" is considered not as of the arrival of the first missionary, but as of the constitution of the first missionary team. This last manner of speaking is instructive and deserves a moment's reflection.

Since the time of the navigators and conquerors of the sixteenth century, it seems that Christians have become accustomed to think of the beginning of a mission as the arrival of some hardy pioneer who, animated by great faith and courage, comes to sow the good seed upon entirely untilled soil. Little by little, or so Christians imagine in the picture they often have of this, the pagans are converted, the missionary administers Baptism, then he continues his work. Soon, he will have the joy of discovering and helping future sacerdotal "vocations" that will bring him indispensable assistance. One day, he will have native priests, and one day, the country will even have its own bishop. The Church is then established.

This sketch is not inaccurate. But it is oversimplified. Usually the missionary does not arrive alone; it is desirable, in fact, that he not arrive alone. Ordinarily, too, the country is not new. Perhaps the missionary may even find on his arrival a considerable Christian community founded by missionaries who came from the same country as he, and also by native converts. Missionaries then, do not start with nothing. A Christian community exists, to which new converts have to be added. This, then, is the task.

[2] A resumé of this story can be read in A. Roche, *Sur les traces de l'Évangile,* Mulhouse, Salvator, 1957, p. 155.

Now we are back to our original question: At what moment can it be said that the Church begins to exist in a given place or environment? Shall we say that the Church begins to exist in a place when that locality has its own bishop? This is true. But before arriving at this point, the Church can begin to exist, though in an imperfect manner, in the form of a baptismal community, or a eucharistic community which has as yet only priests. It is thus that we have presented the present parish—as an imperfect "local Church," and as the present heir of the "local Church" prevalent everywhere in the episcopal pattern during the early centuries. When a Christian baptismal community exists, the Church gradually begins to exist along with it even if there is as yet no bishop, and even if there is as yet no resident priest. This community has a proper and indispensable role to play with respect to non-Christians. For one becomes a Christian not only by "receiving" the Word from a missionary, as if the latter were independent of the institution which sustains him, but by becoming a member of a Church.

The mission as a community

The history of missions down to modern times, but especially during the first centuries, reveals that the mission was almost always conceived not as the sending of isolated ambassadors to the four corners of the pagan world, but as the sending to, or the implantation, in pagan lands of small colonies of Christians which gradually become fruitful and win over to the faith and to the sacraments of the faith, that is, to the Church, the neighboring populaces. To begin at the beginning, even

though this beginning is an exception since it does not involve pagans, there existed in Jerusalem from the time of the first Pentecost, a Church of "Judeo-Christians," that is to say, a Church formed of "converts" from Judaism. (It might be better to say a Church formed of Jews who did not refuse the Word, a Church of those who believed in Jesus Christ, precisely because they continued to believe in the God of Abraham, of Moses, and the prophets, and in the name of their faith.) Now it is around this Church and through the radiance of its faith, its prayer, and its charity, that the "converts" will group themselves. When Paul leaves, after his conversion, and begins to preach, he starts at Damascus, where there already were "disciples" (Acts 9:19). It is these same disciples who are shortly to rescue him from a plot (*id.* 9:25). Then he preaches in Jerusalem, where there is also a Church, until once more, the "brethren" (*id.* 9:30) make him leave for Tarsus in order to avoid any violence on the part of the "Hellenists" (*id.* 9:29). There, Barnabas comes to get him (*id.* 11:25) to lead him to Antioch, where he preaches for a year "in the meetings of the church" (*id.* 11:26). Finally, the two of them are "sent forth by the Holy Spirit" (*id.* 13:4) and go to preach the Gospel to the pagans. In this earliest beginning, at least among the pagans, they are sent together, following the Lord's precept (Mark 6:7). Actually, there are three of them, since they "had also John as assistant" (Acts 13:5). A little later, when Paul has to leave Barnabas and the latter keeps John-Mark with him, Paul takes on a new companion, Silas (*id.* 15:40). Later, on leaving Corinth, he will be accompanied by the newly converted Priscilla and Aquila (*id.* 18:18). Still later, when the

Apostles have preached and the Word has made its way into men's minds, small colonies of Christians will be formed in which the Apostles will choose themselves assistants, "the Elders," and which they will visit in the course of their apostolic travels. It is these colonies that will develop and expand.

This growth will come from friend contacting friend, or even through the departure of a small group for a far-off land. In Lyons, probably by the end of the first century, there was already a colony of Syrian Christians that was to become the focal point of the Church of Lyons. Irenaeus, Pothinus, Blandina, the glorious martyrs of Lyons in the second century, were Orientals.

During the early centuries, it was not the bishops, the "priests" or the "Elders" who went forth to evangelize the nations; it was the baptized who drew pagans to the faith of the Church by their Christian fervor and their contagious faith. And as soon as a Christian community of any size at all existed, it asked for a bishop and a clergy.[3] It was very much the same when monasticism, especially from the sixth century, took on in the West the task of the missions in northern Europe. While it is true to say that "the monks converted Europe," they did this simply by means of disseminating everywhere small monastic colonies which gradually won the pagan environments to the faith of Christ and, simultaneously, to the eucharistic worship of the Church. This is known as apostolate by "intussusception," but this pure method of attraction toward the center and toward the eucharistic celebration must be found of necessity, to some

[3] Cf. G. Bardy, "Le sacerdoce chrétien du Ier au Ve siècle," in *Prêtres d'hier et d'aujourd'hui*, Paris, Cerf, 1954, pp. 23-61.

degree, in all forms of missionary action. It results inevitably from the fact that missionary action is oriented from the outset, as we have shown, to the Eucharist.

This fundamental and irreplaceable role of the Christian community explains the fact that sometimes in a mission country young communities which do not even have a resident priest, but only a catechist or prayer leader and only receive a visit from a priest occasionally —just as the communities of Anatolia or Greece, in St. Paul's time, were only occasionally visited by him—are actually more effective than others. It is unquestionably a paradox that this should be so; communities which have a priest in residence should normally and ordinarily be more fervent, since they are usually given more help. However, we point out the fact[4] to underline, regardless of the cause, the preponderant role in apostolic action of the Christian community as such, no matter how little organized it might be as regards hierarchy. It is this community which is called to make Christ known, to bear witness, to attract by charity in all the forms the latter can take: hospitality, care of the poor and sick, instruction of the ignorant, visiting the unfortunate and the prisoners, etc.

The mission cannot begin, then, without taking into account the initial Christian community, where one exists. And we know that in the majority of cases, at least during all the centuries when Europe was being converted, that is, practically down to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, this initial community did exist, and at times was quite large.

[4] Many examples of this could be found in mission annals. Cf., for example, the fine book by C. Aroud, *Mes tournées missionnaires en Chine,* Paris, Mignard, 306 pp., 1932.

It is true, of course, that the introduction of a foreign community into an already established one poses new problems. How, in fact, can Christianity not appear as a "foreign religion," if the testimony given to it is the testimony of a foreign community? There is an unavoidable risk here. The fact, for instance, that the first Christians of Lyons were oriental emigrants, was perhaps not totally unrelated to the suspicion they aroused with regard to themselves, and, in the end, to their persecution. As another example, the fact that the Catholic Church appears to the English as an Irish Church; to the Greeks as a Latin Church; to the Chinese as a typically Western religion; to the Negroes of certain African nations as an export of the colonial nations, creates a dangerous ambiguity, which is the cause of the problems of adaptation, of assimilation, of acculturation. The question arises as to whether the missionary effort will always be needed so long as the Church in a country retains its foreign character. It is enough to say at this point that the risk of appearing "foreign" must not prevent conversions from being effected within a community which represents and is the Church. This is the origin of the collective missionary efforts, some examples of which have been mentioned.

The fact remains that the initial missionary community can sometimes be large and sometimes quite small. The missionary colonies that the Irish sent onto the continent beginning in the sixth century were often strong and hierarchically organized groups, and each one had its own bishop. These eucharistic communities, hierarchically organized and complete, could, in principle, bear the most authentic witness possible. The

same is true of the monastic colonies which flourished in Germany, then in Scandinavia. But other "missions" were less imposing. May we even speak of a community where there are only two missionaries, even if the latter are Apostles and possess in full the charism and the mandate of the apostolate? The two missionaries can bear witness to their own fraternal love,[5] and so their attachment to the Church which sent them stands out with greater credibility and weight. This is important. Yet the two are not a community in the full sense of the term. Lastly, the missionary may, by way of exception, be alone in the midst of the unbelievers. Paul himself found that he was alone in the Agora of Athens (Acts 17:16), but his appearance there, it must be noted, was not a success.

From this scanning of the "beginning of the Church" and of the missionary community, conclusions may be derived: If we consider the Church in her totality, she has been founded since Christ; she does not have to be established. She has the sacraments that Christ gave her. The missions are at her frontiers, on her borders. They consist in bringing to her faith and her sacraments those among whom the Gospel is carried for the first time. If we consider a local, already existing, Church, the missionary effort there too consists in bringing together by the Word the nonbelievers and sinners living on her fringes, and, ultimately, gathering them in the unity of her eucharistic celebration which is the sacramental sign of her faith, of her hope, and of her

[5] St. Gregory, explaining why the Lord sends His disciples "two by two" (Luke 10:1), states: "The Lord gives us to understand tacitly that whoever does not love his neighbor cannot receive the preaching office" *(Hom. 17 in Evang.)*.

common charity. Finally, if we consider a particular place or environment in the world where the Gospel has not yet been proclaimed externally, the missionary task ordinarily consists in sending to it a eucharistic community, even on a reduced scale, to which, gradually, will be added the flock of those who, after hearing the Word of Salvation, will become converted and will receive Baptism.

Actually, we have seen that the group principle of missionary effort was very often, if not universally, applied in the history of the missions. On the first Pentecost, St. Peter gave the first mission sermon not in isolation but "standing up with the Eleven" (Acts 2:14). Visibly, it was the entire apostolic college speaking through his mouth. The Apostles did likewise, and St. Luke, we have noted, was careful to name the different companions they had with them during their missionary travels. This was done moreover, in imitation of the Lord, who had sent His Apostles on a mission "two by two" (Mark 6:7). One exception was noted—that of St. Paul in Athens. And even there, although his sermon may have been brilliant, we know his effort was at least a partial failure.

Aspects of missionary beginnings

It is, then, difficult to say when the Church begins its existence in any specific place or environment. Prior to the arrival of any missionary community, the "convocation" of the Church may have begun mysteriously in souls by grace and implicit faith—in the sense in which we spoke of it—which invisibly attaches these souls to the visible Church. With the arrival of the

community, it is sacramentally started by this missionary colony itself at the precise moment when it does arrive. No matter how small it may be, the latter represents the seed of a Church, sown by an individual Church, and, through the latter, linked to the entire Church. Between the missionary colony of the beginning and the autonomous, hierarchized Church to which, with God's grace, the former will one day give way, there is, then, as a matter of course, no apparent break in continuity. Since Christ, nowhere does the life of the Church begin from nothing, except in individual souls which have not, as yet, received the grace of Christ.

We say in individual souls, and not necessarily in an entire people. We can never say that *all* the souls of a pagan nation are in a state of mortal sin. Jesus Himself, as we have seen, praised the faith of a Roman centurion, who was a pagan (Matt. 8:10), and that of "a Gentile, a Syrophoenician by birth" (Mark 7:26 and Matt. 15:28). The Apostle Peter was called to visit Cornelius, a Roman centurion and a pagan, because the latter had already been chosen by God to receive Baptism (Acts 10). In short, St. Thomas Aquinas teaches, as we have also seen, that for adults, there is no alternative except the state of grace or the state of mortal sin.[6] Since all are not in the state of mortal sin (the many examples from the New Testament tell us this much),[7] there is therefore

[6] *Summa Theol.*, 1a, 2ae, 89, 6.

[7] This point is illustrated by pontifical documents. Thus, in his letter *Ab ipsis*, to the bishops of China (June 15, 1926), Pius XI declares: "There we find, indeed, infinitely populous and living in an immense territory very far away from us, a people which reached a very high degree of civilization, considering its intellectual merits and its natural honesty, and which, better still, gives assurance, by means of numerous and manifest signs, that it is moving toward the missionaries to

no doubt that here and there some are in the state of grace. But the state of grace of those who have not as yet passed through the baptismal waters is invisible. We know only that it corresponds to a "conversion" either when the person reached the age of reason or later, and that this conversion contains faith—explicit or implicit. It is precisely through this faith which necessarily includes within itself a *votum* (desire) for Baptism, even if the subject is not as yet aware of this orientation to the sacrament, that the convert already belongs, though still invisibly, to the *visible Church.*

This link to the Church is, to be sure, still extremely imperfect, unstable, and fragile. If there is implicit faith, there is no break in continuity in the soul between its present state and the moment when, having heard the revelation of salvation through faith and Baptism from the missionary, the soul agrees to prepare itself to receive Baptism, then actually does receive it. While God alone sees this continuity, this growth and this strengthening, the continuity is nonetheless real. Still, for the sake of clarity, we shall distinguish two orders of beginnings, whether of the Church, of faith, or of the missionary effort. On the one hand, we have that which begins outside of the economy of the means of salvation instituted by Jesus Christ. We have given examples of these "beginnings." In brief, every soul which God justifies before bringing it face to face with a preacher of the Gospel begins, at this point, to enter the *Church,* just as it begins to enter the *faith* of the Church, no

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hear their message." And Pius XII proclaims that the Church "feels at home among all those who respect the commandments of God" (Radio message, previouly mentioned, to Indian Catholics, Dec. 31, 1952).

matter how implicit its faith might still be. At this stage, too, while we speak of a beginning of the *mission,* we mean simply the invisible mission of the Holy Spirit without which, indeed, there is no beginning of grace.

On the other hand, there is that which begins with the economy of the means of salvation instituted by Jesus Christ, that is, with the Word of the preacher and the hearing of this Word, with the sacraments and the hierarchical institution. The *mission* "begins" in this sense, either when the Word is brought to a new people, or when some of them hear and receive the Word, bringing to it the response of their *faith.* As for the *Church,* we may speak of her beginning in this economy, at different levels. On an initial level, she "begins" to be represented in a place or in a given milieu as soon as the first missionary community appears there. On another level, we can say that the Church begins there when the first conversions take place. Finally, on a third level, we speak of the beginning of the Church in a particular place when she has been firmly established there and has her bishop and her clergy chosen from among the inhabitants of the country.

In distinguishing between what happens before and after the preaching of the Word, it is important to stress that we are not making a distinction—for this would be a mistake—between a Church which would in some way be a spiritual Church only, and a Church that would be both spiritual and visible. There is but one Church, sole and unique, which is at once spiritual and visible. Whoever enters the Church, either before hearing the words of the messenger of the Gospel or after, enters the visible, hierarchic, and spiritual Church—

the Church which dispenses the grace of Christ by means of the Word and the sacraments. But the person who enters before hearing this Word is, paradoxically, in the Church without knowing it, without seeing it, and he is deprived of the sacramental means of salvation of which he as yet is ignorant. He is in an abnormal, and therefore precarious and fragile, position, not with regard to the grace of God which is a free gift of God and depends on no other will but God's, but with regard to the ecclesiastical institution founded by God. Though his "conversion" is invisible, and not demonstrable except through a Credo, about which he has not yet heard, the charity of the Church will at all times make every effort to come to him and bring him the divine helps which Christ has remitted to His Spouse. Whoever enters the Church after having heard the Word and precisely because he adheres to the Word, enters into the faith of the Church with foreknowledge; he enters also into the communion of heavenly blessings, by entering the communion of holy things, of the sacred signs which the Church offers or dispenses. He enters the Mystical Body by his visible attachment to its sacramental body.

The end of the missionary effort

If it is so difficult to determine exactly the beginning of the Church amongst a given people—whether this people be defined geographically, ethnically, or sociologically—it will be no easier to define the end of the Church's missionary phase.

Certainly, no one will say that the missionary stage has ended as soon as the mission has a bishop, if this bishop comes from outside. In the sixth century, it has

been pointed out, the Irish missionary colonies which roamed the continent had their own itinerant bishop as well as their own clergy. This was the case also in the missionary efforts of the Anglo-Saxons who, after St. Boniface, evangelized Germany and the Nordic peoples. It was often the case, it appears, in the thirteenth century, in certain missions to the northern and eastern reaches of Christendom. The Church might be present with all her hierarchical organs, yet the missionary phase was not ended until the converts of the country formed a stable, hierarchically organized, eucharistic community. Until this happened in such a place, in one sense—the sense in which the Church is defined essentially not only by the grace of the Holy Spirit, but also and simultaneously by the hierarchical and sacramental mediation of this grace—the Church was not yet founded there. The final goal of the missions, says Pius XII, "the goal to which they must tend and which must always be kept in mind, is for the Church to be firmly and definitively established among new peoples, and for her to receive a local hierarchy chosen from among the natives of the country."[8]

Let us weigh these different terms well. In order for the missions to have attained their goal, the Church must be "firmly and definitively established" among the new peoples to whom she has come. Also, she must "receive a local hierarchy chosen from among the natives of the country." So long as a local Church does not as yet possess within herself the organs of her own propagation—above all the episcopate, which assures the continuance of sacred Orders and, consequently, of the trans-

[8] Encycl. *Evangelii praecones.*

mission of grace—that Church remains dependent upon other Churches, and is neither adult nor stable, but still in the missionary state. But, from another viewpoint, when she does have a bishop and a clergy of the country where she is implanted, she still may not be "firmly and definitively established" if the faith of the Christians is still weak and unstable, tempted to return to paganism; if their evangelization was scarcely completed before Baptism; if the Church still represents only a weak minority in the country; or if, finally, the lack of adaptation of the community of Christians presents the latter to the eyes of the still-pagan peoples as the emanation of a foreign culture, tradition, and society, and causes them to fear that, by belonging thereto, they are losing what is best in their own tradition.

Examples of a Church very slightly or insufficiently evangelized are numerous in the history of the missions. It is enough to recall the mass conversions and Baptisms effected on Charlemagne's orders in Saxe, thanks to the famous *Capitulatio de partibus Saxoniae* which declared, among many similar articles: "Every non-baptized Saxon who seeks to hide among his compatriots and refuses to have Baptism administered to him, shall be put to death."[9] But it would be unfair to stop with this one example. Vladimir, Prince of Russia, promulgated an edict in 989 in which he ordered the general Baptism of his subjects.[10] In the thirteenth century, certain military orders annexed "pagans to the faith by

[9] Cf. *Histoire Universelle des Missions catholiques,* published under the direction of Msgr. S. Delacroix, Paris-Monaco, Ed. de l'Acanthe, vol. I, 1956, p. 126.

[10] *Id.,* p. 136.

force."[11] Even in the midst of the most ancient and most Christian areas, in Syria-Palestine in the third and fourth centuries, "it appears that while certain communities were already numerous enough to possess an elite of ascetics (one does not yet dare say 'monks'), in other localities there are only a few families, or even only a few Christian married women or young girls, and it is quite normal to find other cities or villages which are still entirely pagan."[12] And, at the other end of Europe, in Scandinavia, even in the tenth century it could be said of certain Christians: "They have been baptized and re-baptized, and after their Baptism have lived as pagans, killing Christians, massacring priests, sacrificing to idols."[13]

Regardless of the apparent success of the external missionary effort, these examples demonstrate how useful and oftentimes necessary it is to extend it by means of "interior" missionary activity. The latter could only be eliminated, in theory, if the population were perfectly converted and evangelized. We must also count on sacramental graces to effect this conversion of souls. The entire history of the Church is a witness against unreasonable demands being made of converts and catechumens. The Church has never presented herself as the Church of the "pure," like that of the Donatists in the third century, or as a Church of the "perfect," like that of the Cathari in the thirteenth century, or as an assembly of "puritans." She knows that the mercy of God is long lived, and she counts on the length of

[11] *Id.*, p. 176.
[12] *Id.*, p. 49.
[13] *Id.*, p. 133.

years, sometimes centuries, and the patient work of sacramental grace, to establish in a "firm and stable" manner the faith of a grouping of Christians. Evangelization is helped by Baptism, but it is often far from being complete at that point.[14]

Examples of a Church representing only a minority in the country where it is established are easy to find; certain Churches in Africa today have their own bishops —Negro bishops—yet have not ceased to be mission lands, because the converted populations are minorities. The same holds true for Denmark, England, and elsewhere, though in such countries one does not always speak of missions as such, since it is not primarily nonbelievers but "separated Christians" that the Church finds in those places.

As for examples of Churches which still seem foreign to the countries where they are implanted, we need not look only to certain Afro-Asian nations, today so violently anti-Western, to find them. In England itself, to mention only one country, Catholicism is often considered a Christianity of Irish origin, not only by reason of the influence of certain of its members, but also because of its publications, its press, its customs, and its particular ceremonies.

It is therefore difficult, even on the basis of a definition as solid and authoritative as the one which we

[14] Especially if Baptism has been prematurely administered. Father de Ménasce wisely noted, in 1945, that "the mission status lasts longer than it seems to, and the missionary mentality risks yielding too soon to that of the pastor." He demanded of the preacher of the Gospel an "infectious state of faith" ("Polarité de l'activité missionnaire," in *Nouv. Revue de science missionnaire,* 1945, pp. 81-87). This excellent apologia for the spiritual means of missionary activity deserves rereading.

have used, to determine the precise moment when the "mission" properly so called, is finished in any given country. The hierarchy itself does not determine this moment precisely, since, to keep to an official and juridical definition, the mission cannot be said to be terminated until the Church of a nation has a hierarchy chosen, if not exclusively, at least mainly, from "among the inhabitants of the country," and when the number and importance of native Christian families is able to establish the Church's right to represent in her own way an authentic tradition of the country. And even this does not mean that the faith will always be received as it should be. But how do we measure the "chief part" given to the native clergy? How do we measure the "number and importance of native families and their character as true representatives of their nation"? A fortiori, how do we measure faith? The hierarchy may well be established, as in many regions of Africa, Denmark, and elsewhere, yet we cannot say that, because of that, the entire missionary phase of the Church's action is over. How then are we to measure the state of a country's Christianization?

When sociologists evaluate the degree of Christianization of our European or American nations, they generally rely on the number of Baptisms entered in registries. Sometimes they also note Sunday or seasonal observance. These figures certainly are indications. But are they enough? What do they really mean? Are we to say, for instance, that Brazil is "more Catholic" than Belgium or France because the proportion of Catholics is greater in Brazil? Is it not true that the ratio of priests to inhabitants is much higher in Belgium and

France than in Brazil? All the more so, too, as regards the number of priests sent abroad. While Brazil and Argentina have for a very long time had native bishops —at least of Brazilian or Argentine "nationality"—it is far from the case that the clergy of these countries are "chosen from among the inhabitants of the country," or that they could be.[15] And are we going to say that a particular region of France will become a "mission land" again when the percentage of baptized persons drops below that of some mission country? What shall we say this percentage is?

The complexity of the problem, which consists in determining precisely the moment when the Church of a country, of a people, or even of a milieu, begins to exist, or ceases to be in a missionary status, is clear enough. At least now the question has been raised.

[15] In his letter to Cardinal Piazza, President of the General Conference of the Latin-American Episcopate, on June 29, 1955, Pius XII stated: "Catholicism in that continent presents deficiencies which are each day more seriously dangerous."

Twelve

THE MISSIONS IN LAW AND THEOLOGY

The efforts we have just made to try to establish the beginning and the end of the missionary effort have not been without profit if they have enabled us to see that at any point in this endeavor we could arrive at widely divergent results, depending on which aspect of the Church we had in mind. We could be thinking of the sacramental and visible sign of Baptism (the hierarchic, sacramental, and visible mediation of the Church—including the words of the preacher) or we could be more concerned with the invisible reality of grace and of the virtue of faith—produced, to be sure, *ex opere operato,* by virtue of the sacrament, though not necessarily at the very instant of the sacramental celebration. The sacrament can also act, as we have seen, at a (temporal) distance, either before or after its reception.

This distinction between the sign and the reality signified is extremely important to our study. We must not separate these two aspects, but must be supremely mindful of their distinction. We must also consider that, according to the disciplines which they study, missiologists will stress one aspect or the other and therefore will arrive at somewhat different definitions. Let us consider, for example, the distinct viewpoints of the canonist and the theologian.

In law

Under the word "missions," the canon lawyer includes

two types of apostolic action: the first are the internal missions, that is, those organized within Christian nations;[1] the second type are the external missions which "develop in heretical or infidel lands."[2] Canons 1349 and 1351 deal with these two types of missions. On the subject of the external missions, paragraph two of Canon 1350 states only that "in other territories [those in which the hierarchy has not yet been established], the entire care of the missions to non-Catholics is reserved exclusively to the Apostolic See." There is then, even in canon law, a necessary ambiguity in the word "missions." Without speaking of "internal" or "external" missions, as the commentators do, canon law speaks of missions within dioceses having their own hierarchy and possessing all the organs of a particular Church, and of missions "in other territories." The first missions are considered as extensions, or occasions of greater emphasis, of the institutional preaching of the Church: Canons 1349 to 1351 follow Canons 1337 to 1348, which deal with preaching under the responsibility and direction of the Ordinary. The second type of mission is dedicated to spreading the faith amid peoples where, since the hierarchy has not yet been established, the responsibility for the diffusion of the Gospel falls on the Holy See. The organ of this responsibility is the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith.

Though there is ambiguity, it is nevertheless remarkable that Canon 252, which sets the functions of this Congregation, mentions only the second sense. The canon

[1] R. Naz, *Traité de droit canonique*, vol. 3, Letouzey et Ané, 1948, p. 136.
[2] *Id.*

states: "The Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith is in charge of the missions destined to the preaching of the Gospel and of Catholic doctrine."

The word "missions" here is not specified. But we know from Canon 1350, par. 2, that it concerns solely those territories where the hierarchy is not yet established, responsibility for which is "reserved exclusively to the Holy See." This means, consequently, that "missions" in Canon Law admit of a broader sense (internal missions of dioceses) and of a reserved sense by which one may speak of "mission territories" or of the "missionary status" of a territory. Paragraph 3 of Canon 252 stipulates: "Its jurisdiction [i.e., the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith] is limited to the regions where the sacred hierarchy is not yet established and where the missionary status [*status missionis*] persists. It also extends to the regions which, while having an already-constituted hierarchy, still include some rudimentary factors in their ecclesiastical organization [*adhuc inchoatum aliquid praeseferunt*]."

In other words, the "missionary status" continues either until the hierarchy is constituted, or until the ecclesiastical organization is set up and established in a less rudimentary fashion than at the outset. Without wishing to bring in any additional refinements that might not square with the facts, it is easy to see what the Code is alluding to and to draw therefrom some sufficiently precise conclusions as to what, in the Church, is or is not in a missionary status. There is no doubt, for instance, that the apostolic prefectures and vicariates where the hierarchy has not yet been constituted, are mission territories. Also, those dioceses where the

hierarchy has been established or re-established, but which remain under the jurisdiction of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith because their internal organization is still inchoate, are mission territories. Also in a missionary status are those dioceses which reflect the same condition but which depend on the Sacred Congregations for the Oriental Church, or for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, or on the Consistorial Congregation, either because these dioceses are of a non-Latin rite, or because they stem from the ancient Portuguese *padronado,* or for other reasons.

On the other hand, the dioceses of the ancient realms, Italy, France, Spain, Belgium, Austria, Croatia, etc.—where the hierarchy has long been established and Christian organization developed—are duly constituted Churches, certainly being no longer in a "missionary status." These are stable Christian areas—at least so long as disasters such as that which the ancient Christendom of North Africa experienced in the sixth century do not upset them—and they are always spiritually fertile, both in perpetuating themselves and in spreading the faith to the world outside them.

In theology

The canon lawyer is mostly interested, and necessarily so, in the exterior aspect of the reality he studies. Wishing to define laws, powers, and jurisdictions, he is constrained to do so by means of the exterior signs which render these things socially apparent. When a catechumen gives the appearance of believing, manifests a desire to receive Baptism and is leading an upright life, he cannot be refused Baptism, even if, by some impossible chance,

he were playing a monstrous joke. If one of the faithful approaches the communion rail in the state of mortal sin, the priest cannot refuse him Communion so long as this sin is not public and known to all. Even over the one receiving the sacrament, canon law necessarily has a limited competence. If, for example, a young lady should approach marriage with little confidence in God and with the intention of having as few children as possible, so long as she does not totally exclude them in her intentions the marriage is certainly valid, and she has a "right" to the sacrament, nor could the priest or any other counsellor keep her from it, even if it were true that the selfishness of her intentions places a certain obstacle to obtaining all the spiritual fruits of the sacrament. In truth, God alone knows the reins and the heart and it would be intolerable both with regard to active powers and to passive powers, that the "rights" of Christians should be defined in terms of invisible intentions, which are unknowable except through representation by external signs. No matter how far it goes or wants to go in laying hold of intention, the law can only be defined by the humanly perceptible signs of this intention.

Through theology, the science of God, or the science subordinated to the vision which God and the blessed have of things, we enter into the knowledge of invisible realities and try to discern them invisibly and to define them. Regardless of how far he goes in the comprehension of reality, the canon lawyer nevertheless grasps it through fixed and definite signs, and *it is on the basis of these signs* that he applies the law, that is, *that he acts*. The theologian is no further advanced than the canon lawyer in determining the exact dimensions of

what is invisible, if he starts with the same exterior signs which both of them know. Grace cannot be weighed. One does not judge the quality and the exact merit of the faith of a convert or of a baptized person. But theological science is not exclusively practical. It is practical only if it begins with the principles which it establishes in the "mirror" of its vision, which is faith; that is, it must proceed speculatively. The effort of theological knowledge is *principally speculative.* This is why it can readily, truly, fully, define what faith is, even if, unfortunately, this definition can rarely be applied. It can study the economy of justification in the soul of the convert, even if it is incapable of locating its phases concretely and precisely in the progress of any particular nonbeliever toward God. It can define the interior requirements of a living eucharistic community even if it cannot make a rigorous diagnosis of where any particular community stands with respect to this ideally defined community.

Experimental and theoretical knowledge

There are, therefore, in some way, two levels of reality in the Church in general as well as in each sacrament: the visible *sign* and the invisible *reality* which is signified. These two levels of reality command two distinct orders of knowledge as well as the two points of view which concern, in different ways, the canon lawyer and the theologian. It is very important to distinguish between these two levels, these two orders of knowledge, these two points of view. But it is no less important not to separate them. Otherwise one would end up with errors more serious than those which result from confusing the

two. Penance, one of the most "human" of the sacraments, illustrates what we are saying here.

Theology states that the grace of God and the conversion which corresponds thereto in the heart of the sinner, erase sin. Such a proposition is in no way presumptuous and we can readily maintain it since it is dictated to us by our faith. But it does not mean that in any particular case we can affirm grace because there has been conversion or, even less, that because there has been grace, there is, therefore, repentance. What we know of our neighbor's soul we only know by signs and by common experience. Also, our knowledge is uncertain. We cannot affirm too positively that there is grace and virtue or that there is sin and loss of grace, without fear of being wrong. And one must not wish for another kind of knowledge here. Knowledge by means of signs is all that the shepherd of souls can and must obtain.

Knowledge through signs is enough for the diagnosis of the confessor, for his judgment, for the counsels he may give, just as it suffices for the penitent in reaching his decisions and resolutions. We are dealing with two kinds of knowledge, theoretical and experimental, and it would be a mistake to wish to reduce the latter to the former, or to so misconstrue the nature of the latter as to dictate to the confessor empirical formulas and rules that might be valid in a certain number of "cases" but which, no longer stemming immediately from what has been established in *theology,* would always risk being falsely applied. The rules of pastoral action are, in the matter of penance, those inspired by the theology of justification and conversion, but they must keep in

mind the fact that the "contents of conscience" which correspond to justification and contrition are never known except by signs. No matter how good a psychologist the confessor may be, no matter how strong the casuist may be in his knowledge of "cases" of conversion or repentance, neither one can, in the last analysis, transcend this knowledge through signs—an inability which is our lot so long as we do not see God face to face, and see souls in Him.

What is true of the sacrament of Penance, with respect to the grace of conversion, is equally true, *mutatis mutandis,* of the sacrament of Baptism and of every other sacrament, just as it is true of every sacramental.

It was necessary to insist on the distinction between these two levels of our knowledge because it is a permanent and often a legitimate temptation of the human spirit to seize and dominate its object in some way. When it can know only through signs, it easily forgets the precariousness, the relativity or the incertitude of this particular knowledge. It therefore affirms and peremptorily decides when it should only speak out humbly and with a certain fear of being wrong.

Visible and invisible aspects

Let us apply this important distinction to the theology of the missions. We may first of all consider the missions in relation to the invisible realities of grace. The missions, in the strict sense, consist in bringing nonbelievers to the grace of conversion by announcing to them in the manner described earlier—with assurance and by means of appropriate testimonies—the Word of salvation. In this strict sense, the mission begins with the preaching

of the Gospel (what "begins" beforehand is prior to the divine economy of the Gospel); it ends, on the one hand, when the soul finds faith, and more precisely finds it in a way that corresponds both in knowledge and in fervor to the soul's capabilities at the age and in the condition in which it finds itself; the mission can also be said to end when the soul is spiritually attached, without strain and without injury, to the community of believers.

These two aspects—accession to the faith, adherence to the community of believers—are not, of course, two different events, but one. They are made two only by mentioning them separately. It is in the bosom of the community and by being gradually incorporated into it that the soul arrives at the fullness of its faith. And it is by discovering the faith that it joins up with its new brethren to form this community of living faith whose desire brought the mission into existence.

In regard to the sign, this terminal stage of the missions usually corresponds to the baptismal community as we defined it, and even more fully, to the eucharistic community which is the seed of "Christian initiation." While the grace of faith can be received, as we have said, before the ceremony of Baptism, it is never without relation to Baptism, and it is this sacrament which completes in the heart of the convert his movement toward God who seals and consecrates this movement. Also, while the missions have as their function to lead souls to conversion, we are forced, *in regard to the sign,* to fix the terminal stage of missionary action not at the often invisible moment of conversion or the beginning of the catechumenate, but at the moment of Baptism and of the entry into the Church of the baptized; or,

still more perfectly, at the moment of gathering around the eucharistic banquet table.

But if we say that the missionary effort ends with Baptism, or with the final sacrament of Christian initiation, the Eucharist, what then is the exact status of the *conversions signified* by Baptism or First Communion? We have seen that the faith-Baptism combination can play diverse roles, depending on whether we are speaking of adult converts who wait a long time for Baptism *after* they have begun to believe, or of young baptized children, in whom grace, given "on account" by the sacrament, awaits the act of faith which must eventually ratify the Baptism. Grace and the act of faith corresponding thereto in the heart of the convert are the mysterious realities signified and given by Baptism, but the reality of the act of faith already stimulated in the convert by the grace of a future Baptism, or ratifying a past Baptism in the child, is difficult to discern. Some children will have ratified their Baptism on reaching the age of reason, or at the time of their first catechism lesson. Others, raised in a nonbelieving environment or family, will take a long time—sometimes not until after the profession of faith which is demanded of them for renewal of their baptismal promises—to ratify their Baptism. It is impossible to speak confidently about this "ratification," when, as happens in certain parishes, 90 to 95 per cent of the children who profess the faith abandon all practice of religion a year later. Actually, the ratification of which we speak does not necessarily take place by some externally visible act, still less in a solemn ceremony, however useful and necessary the latter might be. Ratification corresponds to a total com-

mitment of the self, and if the child does not "ratify" at the age of reason, then this ratification will later correspond to a real conversion.

The "subject" of the mission, the one who is not yet converted, may therefore be a particular member of the Church living in the midst of the baptized, and baptized himself. There are some, says St. Augustine, who seem to be inside but are in reality outside.

Let us go further. We have said that the missionary effort ended when the soul reached that measure of faith which corresponds, both in knowledge and in fervor, to the soul's own capabilities at the age and in the condition in which it finds itself. This measure is normally attained at the moment of the Baptism which consecrates the movement of the convert toward faith, or else at the age of reason, at the moment when the child internally ratifies the grace of his Baptism. Usually, too, baptismal grace develops all through life in the baptized, and faith maintains, at each stage of life, this ever-growing correspondence with the age and state of the believer.

But is it always thus? Adolescents and young persons, if they do not lose the faith, undergo such assaults in the course of their physical, affective, and intellectual growth, that their faith often becomes weak or lukewarm, or lapses into a sleep close to death. Someday they will have to be reconverted, or at least acquire, with the grace of God, the stability and firmness of conversion without which the latter is neither certain nor complete. They are therefore the subjects of missionary effort in the very measure that their conversion is neither stabilized nor terminated. The same is true for many adult

believers, harassed by the reasonings of unbelief, whose life is an incessant seesaw between the temptation of, and dubious pleasure in, believing in nothing, and the desire of believing without really knowing the basis for the faith they seek; these, too, are in need of missionary activity. As a matter of fact, it is principally for these people that the Church institutes those "missions" in regard to which, as we have seen, canon law lays down rules immediately following the articles concerning preaching.

The subjects of missionary effort

At all stages of the Church's growth—catechetical community, baptismal community, eucharistic community—we can find "subjects" for missionary activity properly so-called. At all stages of the life of a baptized person, we have a possible subject for a mission, someone who can be reawakened in his faith and at times even brought back to it by a forceful recalling of the kerygma. If the Church, during the entire period of her growth, does not continue recalling the initial message of salvation on which our faith is founded and the whole interior edifice built up, then she risks losing little by little, sometimes even without the loss being apparent, what she acquired in so precarious a manner[3] (due to the weakness of men, not to the ineffectiveness of grace) at Baptism.

[3] This is the place to recall the remark made by Canon Boulard who, in studying certain regions of France today referred to as "de-Christianized," noted that some of them have never been "evangelized," properly speaking. Attachment to the Church had been effected, though without constraint, by a sort of sociological pressure without any formation or catechetical instruction. So too, according to historians and missiologists, certain regions of Latin America were "sacramentalized" without being really evangelized.

What shall we say then? That the missions embrace and contain the whole pastoral action of the Church? If so, we would be deriving no profit from our analyses and our words would no longer have any meaning. For us, the mission is always the action which consists in bringing nonbelievers to conversion and into the community of the converted, even if this conversion remains partially invisible or difficult to determine accurately in its different dimensions. What we can determine of it suffices for action; we need not know any more about it.

We will, then, find missionary activity, primarily and primordially, in the first stage of evangelization, that which ends with conversion and entry into the catechumenate. This phase is fundamental, and it is with reference to it that the other phases are designated as "missionary." We also find missions wherever it is necessary to stimulate the act of faith which, despite the sacramental sign received, has not as yet ratified the Baptism internally, totally, and in a stable fashion. Missionary activity is also necessary wherever, in the ebb and flow of the life of faith, this faith is being lost or weakened, or is not attaining the measure which normally corresponds to what Baptism means for the age and state in which the baptized person finds himself.

Basically, missionary effort will therefore be addressed to nonbelievers and nonbaptized persons. But the missionary action, which consists in announcing the initial message of salvation, must be renewed during the entire catechetical period to insure an ever more solid foundation for catechetical instruction. Among the baptized, missionary action will be directed to the adolescents and young people, especially at the moment when they ex-

perience the first tests of their faith, to help them to conquer the instability of their adherence and become converted in a solid way. It will also be directed to all those who, exposed by their personal weakness or by their occupation or environment, to the solicitations of unbelief or infidelity, are too easily defeated when they should be conquering. "This," says St. John, "is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith" (1 John 5:4). Where, then, is the faith of those who are defeated? Where is their conversion? It is up to missionary effort to convert them effectively and in a lasting manner.

Thirteen

CONVERSION: THE MISSIONARY TASK

Is this extension of missionary activity beyond the circles of unbelief even into the ranks of those who apparently present themselves as believers and enter the Church, legitimate? To reply to this question, let us ask ourselves first of all where the necessity of conversion, to which the preaching of the mission corresponds, terminates.

It is customary these days to consider conversion as a phase which is forgotten as soon as it has passed and has been expressed, or consecrated, by the sacramental sign of Baptism. This concept is not false, but it is somewhat inadequate, especially if one has in mind only the external rite of Baptism, forgetting the whole activity of conversion which this rite signifies and for which it gives grace. One enters the Church through Baptism, but also and simultaneously, through conversion.

As a matter of fact, conversion is the typical state of the Christian, into which he entered once and never ceases entering more profoundly. The Church is a society of converts, but also a society of conversion. In the Church, one never stops turning away from the Evil One and moving toward God.

It is almost superfluous to demonstrate that one enters the Church through conversion. It is precisely in this that the Church is distinct from many other religions; it is her originality. Jesus begins His ministry in Galilee by preaching conversion: "Repent, for the kingdom of

heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:17). It is also to preach conversion that Jesus sent His Apostles (Luke 24:47), and it is conversion which all of them indeed preach (Mark 6:12; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 26:20, etc.). Conversion is imperative; it is proclaimed to and demanded of all, even though it is also a grace for which the "Gentiles" should be grateful. When Peter had justified his conduct in the presence of the Judean brethren in Jerusalem, the latter were amazed and calmed, and they shouted out: "Therefore to the Gentiles also God has given repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18), and "they glorified God."

Conversion is never so assured that it can be taken for granted. The Galileans who were Pilate's victims (Luke 13:1), were certainly not "worse sinners than all the other Galileans," yet Jesus takes advantage of the event to tell His disciples: "Unless you repent, you will all perish in the same manner" (*id.* 3). Jesus loves the person who, having heard His Word, realizes he has need of conversion and indeed does repent. "There will be joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, more than over ninety-nine just who have no need of repentance" (Luke 15:7).

The Apostles, too, never grow tired of preaching repentance, not only to the pagans, but also to those who believe themselves secure on the path of salvation (Rom. 2:1 ff.), or who have already been converted but who conduct themselves as if they had not (2 Cor. 7:9; 12:21). To several of the Churches St. John addresses, he preaches conversion with his vigor as a Son of Thunder: "Repent and do the former works," he orders the Church of Ephesus (Apoc. 2:5. Also Apoc. 2:16; 2:21; 3:3).

While Baptism can only be administered once because

of the *apax*—the absolute uniqueness—of the mystery of the Passion, the sacrament of Penance has the role, not only of restoring the penitent to the dispositions of his first conversion, but also of completing and perfecting it. In this regard, we could point to the parallel nature of the preaching of Baptism and Penance in the early centuries, as well as the parallels between the rites and the conditions required for conversion.

It is true that a certain hesitancy is apparent in these early centuries regarding the possibility of a "second repentance." Certain rigorists, such as Tertullian, had difficulty conceiving that, once converted, a person could have need of a second conversion. Was not the entire Christian life after Baptism, through the formulas of repentance, the blessings and the rites which accompanied that life, an effort to enter more profoundly into conversion and to be fixed somehow in this movement? While others readily accepted a second repentance, they considered it simply as a kind of confirmation of the first one. Thus Origen would place greater confidence in this second repentance than in Baptism itself. The second event seemed more solid and sure to him; a man knows to what he is being converted for the second time. The sacrament of Penance is for him rather like what our Confirmation is for us, with this difference, that, with Origen, the emphasis is placed on the grace of stability in conversion.

But the Holy Spirit, who makes us understand all that Jesus taught and did, often enlightens us through the experience He gives both of our own weakness and of God's mercy. Since the Church was, during the early centuries, victorious in many battles, since Christians

and their shepherds were so often found to be admirable in their faith and courage, many had the illusion that after Baptism, the Christian "convert," as a matter of course, no longer sinned—or at least that he was no longer capable of committing any but sins of "weakness," soon forgiven by prayers for the mercy of God. In the fourth century, this illusion was dissipated, but without weakening the necessity of conversion for membership in the Church. On the contrary, the whole eremitical and monastic movement which began with so much fervor during the fourth and fifth centuries, demonstrates the opposite effect. By becoming aware of the weaknesses of her members, by repeating the sacrament of Penance, the Church made Christians enter with even more realism and greater profundity into the state of conversion which, nevertheless, was signified once and for all by their Baptism. This is why there was no equivocation in calling the monks the *conversi,* a name which remained, furthermore, for a certain category of religious who have no other specialty but that which is essential to religious life: to complete and to perfect the conversion of one's Baptism. We never finish becoming converted through a living faith in Jesus Christ and all that this demands from us.

Let us therefore be wary of presenting the conversion of the "nonbeliever" as a temporary action which terminates in a ceremony, even if that ceremony is Baptism. Whether conversions are of the nonbeliver to the faith, or of the baptized sinner to friendship with God, they have this in common: a return to God in a living faith. The dead faith of the sinner is also, in its own way, a lack of faith; what is involved is not always or necessarily

a lack of knowledge, but, more important, a lack of that adherence thanks to which a person begins to know God. Conversions in any of these cases stem from the mission, which is, indissolubly, the announcement of the Good News of salvation and a solemn call to conversion before the Judgment.

We could illustrate this teaching by numerous facts of the history, or of the present practice, of the missions. Though they were very soon baptized, the peoples of Europe took centuries to be "converted" merely to the state—which some, moreover, judge to be quite mediocre —in which they are today. Pagan dances, gladiatorial combat, certain un-Christian customs, would remain in Rome for centuries after that city had become Christian, despite the preaching and the condemnations of the popes. Superstition, magic, certain pagan cults would endure for a long time after the Baptism of the Northern peoples. Today, in some primitive areas, missionaries are obliged to recognize that ruses, trickery, and lying, which are perhaps only the reverse of certain atavistic qualities, still abound among Christians. For individuals, as for peoples, complete conversion is a long drawn-out process. The mercy of God converts us after long years— or centuries. The sacraments, which the Word of God accompanies, are the privileged instrument of this mercy, even if they can only be administered after proof, or relative proof, has been given of a first conversion.

Specific nature of missionary action

If this is the scope of missionary action, how are we to place it *practically* within the framework of ecclesial action?

Before replying to this question, let us underscore once again the difference of emphasis between the viewpoint of the canon lawyer and that of the theologian. The canon lawyer is limited to establishing in a general way, not taking individual differences into account, the external specifications for missionary action. This action, as we have seen, has two forms: the action of the Church with respect to nonbelievers in areas where the hierarchy has not yet been constituted or is in a rudimentary stage and the special type of preaching which the bishops and pastors must periodically assure in their dioceses and parishes to bring to the faith those nonbelievers who live on the fringes of Christian belief and to reawaken and strengthen the faith of the believers.

It also has a third meaning according to which the mission signifies not only missionary action but also the institution specializing in this action. Thus, for example, an apostolic prefecture or vicariate, a diocesan "mission band" (a team of priests assigned to mission work within the diocese), etc.

The theologian, concentrating more on the reality signified by the sign than on the sign itself, tries to determine the components of faith and conversion which *normally and fully correspond to the sacramental sign of Baptism.* He can do this easily so long as he approaches it from a speculative point of view. When he wants to be practical, in elaborating a pastoral theology, or a mission theology, he applies this doctrine under the guidance of faith, and does not rest until *Baptism has been given both in the soul of the baptized person, as well as in the entire baptismal community, all the fullness and breadth of its significance.* While being careful not to exaggerate

these positions, which ultimately have to coincide, we might say of the canon lawyer that he puts the emphasis on the sign insofar as it is a fact, a document, or a thing, and of the pastoral theologian that he puts the accent on the reality signified because he is trying to achieve it perfectly, even though he knows it and can communicate it, only through signs.

If the signs immediately and surely yielded the fullness of their meaning, the missionary effort would unquestionably halt at the moment of Baptism, or even at the moment of the initial profession of faith or when the convert gave the first sign of his faith. The Church's missionary action would come to a halt, then, as soon as the Church was established among a given populace in an apparently firm and stable manner; that is to say, when the eucharistic community, the goal of the initiation, having ceased to be a missionary institution, would possess in itself organs of transmission, perpetuation, and stability: a bishop and his clergy, a majority—or an influential number—of Christian homes.

All this is true, but only to the degree that the signs yield their whole meaning. As soon, for instance, as families no longer practice the faith, or hardly practice it, or no longer give their children religious instruction, they are interiorly in retreat with regard to the sacramental, visible, external, sign of their marriage and with regard to the sign of their Baptism. As soon as the eucharistic community becomes lukewarm, shuts in on itself, and cultivates a sort of caste or class selfishness, and ignores its own missionary task, it is internally deficient as regards the grace of Baptism and the Eucharist, even though it may still, externally, approach the

communion rail from time to time. As soon as the baptized child—even if he has already made his First Communion—no longer receives Communion (a fortiori if he has never received since his First Communion), no longer prays, practically no longer even believes, he is internally deficient with respect to what his Baptism would normally signify in him. Perhaps he has not yet really ratified it. Perhaps he ratified it too lightly and his too-fragile ratification did not hold up in the face of the test of an indifferent or hostile environment.

The true shepherd is especially sensitive to this interior aspect of the sacramental reality. It is not enough for him to give the sacramental signs of Baptism and the Eucharist. He must dispose souls and prepare them for this, and he must see to it that no obstacle prevents the sacramental sign from being fully honored, in all the fullness of its meaning, by the recipient. This is why he must never stop renewing his missionary activity both toward those who, in his experienced judgment as a pastor, seem clearly in need of it, and toward his entire community, in order to reach by his words and his witness those whose doubts, weaknesses, and instability in the faith he cannot see and who, precisely because of this, need missionary action. A eucharistic community which would never be evangelized in the fundamental sense of this term, would risk profiting very little from doctrine and exhortations. It would be like a house built on shifting terrain whose foundations would gradually become dislodged.

It is true, and cannot be emphasized enough, that such considerations as these underline the importance of evangelization before Baptism. And often believers under

instruction are more ardent in their faith than some baptized persons. But it would be imprudent for the missionary to prolong this phase too long, since he cannot perfect anything in a definitive way without the sacramental means at his disposal, beginning with the sacrament of Baptism.

How then are we to place missionary action in a practical way within the activity of the Church taken as a whole? Let us finally answer this question on which our research should have shed some light. Missionary action is defined by its goal and its intended recipients, by its object, by its method.

A. The immediate goal of missionary action is to lead the nonbeliever to believe, or the believer to respect the full significance of his Baptism. This is neat and it suffices, even if the missionary does not see with the acuity and certitude which are the privilege of God alone, the precise degree of unbelief or of faith in those whom he is evangelizing. So, too, the confessor does not see, as God sees it, the exact measure of gravity and of responsibility for sin on the part of the one confessing it; in this area he can obtain nothing except by signs and through experience. But that is the way the sacrament works, and this is enough for the practical judgment of the confessor, for his judgment and his counsel, even though this judgment and counsel, no matter how practical they may be, must be permeated with humility and modesty in view of all that is not seen. God alone sees perfectly. Even the sinner knows himself but imperfectly. Even he who loves does not know how much he loves. The same is true also in the judgment of the missionary who is to bring the Word of salvation to all

those for whom he sees it to be necessary: nonbelievers and nonbaptized persons, adolescents and young people in whom the decision of faith is as yet insecure, baptized souls without fervor, more or less contaminated by unbelief and those things in the modern world which are obstacles to faith.

As we have said, too, leading the nonbeliever to belief is also to attach him spiritually and socially to the Church. In this sense, which is impossible to dissociate from the first goal, the ultimate goal of the missionary effort is the foundation of an autonomous eucharistic community (the terminal point of Christian initiation), possessing in itself all the hierarchical organisms.

B. The object of the mission is to proclaim the Word which announces salvation: Jesus Christ, Son of God, has been sent to save us, and He has indeed saved us by His death and resurrection. This proclamation of the "kerygma" must, in some way, be permanent in the Church, since it is the Church that guarantees the foundation and the solidity of the entire structure. This is her prophetic function. Prophetic function, kerygmatic function, evangelizing function—these are synonymous. The essence of the message is always the same, even if the hearers of the Gospel are widely different. St. Paul found different points of departure when he addressed himself to the Jews and to the pagans; his preaching took the special characteristics of each audience into consideration.

C. As to the method of the missionary activity, it is essential to stress, as we have done, that it must be carried out with the conviction and the assurance of a

living and full faith, and that it must include appropriate testimonies.[1]

To sum up, missionary action, from the theological and pastoral point of view, with which we are concerned here, consists in proclaiming the kerygma with assurance in order to obtain the faith of conversion in every place, in every man and in all mankind, and in every community where this proclamation is necessary, *so that the sacraments of Christian initiation may be thoroughly respected in the fullness of their meaning.*[2]

The mission: a phase and aspect of ecclesial action

At the conclusion of this analysis, missionary action appears before us in all its breadth: first, as a period or phase of ecclesial action, but also as a permanent aspect of that action.

A phase of ecclesial action. In this sense, the mission consists in an announcement (a sign) of the Gospel and of Baptism which bears and communicates the truth, divine grace, and faith (the realities signified). It terminates with the Baptism (the sign) of the one who, having heard the Word, also received it and believed it (the reality signified).

[1] See the above chapters on miracles and martyrdom.

[2] Need we add that the practical consequences of this distinction we have made between the sign and the reality signified hold for all the sacraments and not only for the initiatory ones? Immediately after Communion, the Church has the priest say each day: "Quod ore sumpsimus, Domine, pura menta capiamus . . ."—what we have taken *orally,* let us also receive in a pure *spirit.* The liturgy comes back repeatedly to this need for honoring fully the sacramental signs, or, and this amounts to the same thing, to the interior requirements of the signs. Theology only translates these requirements. On this point, one can read in the *Tertia Pars* of the *Summa* those questions (66 and following) which deal with the effects and ritual of each sacrament.

Much is left implicit, however, in this fundamental definition. Certainly, the Word, the Gospel, Baptism, as well as the interior realities of conversion, of faith, and of grace, have in themselves a relationship to the Church. Whoever becomes converted to Jesus Christ enters into the communion of His members and into His Body which is the Church. The Word, for its part, is a collective appeal on the part of the Church to an unbelieving people to be converted and to join the community of the believers. This relationship to the Church must therefore not be forgotten nor simply implied. And so, a less abstract definition can be set forth which explicitly mentions the Church: The mission is the announcement (the sign) of the Gospel and of Baptism to a "Gentile" people to bring this people to the conversion of faith (the reality signified) and to Baptism (the sign). The mission ends when the community of faith is hierarchically established in a firm and stable way, that is, when it possesses the organs for its continuance and the ministries of its propagation (sacramental and hierarchical signs of Orders, the sacramental sign of marriage which sets Christian families apart) which are normally the expression of its autonomy in communion with the rest of the Church, of its stability, and of its fruitfulness in the faith.

A permanent aspect of ecclesial action. In saying that the missionary effort is also found, after Baptism, throughout the range of the Church's activity, there is a great danger of confusing missionary action with the whole pastoral area. This danger must be avoided by means of clear definitions which determine what is proper to each action and prevent the attribution to one

of what belongs to the other. Even if there is a particular concrete act which, according to the viewpoint used, can belong to either missionary or pastoral action—or to catechetical action—these activities or their definitions are nevertheless neither changed nor confused. An example relating to the virtues and vices will clarify this point.

The species and definitions of virtues are so precise that no one is tempted to confuse one with the other. Still, there is almost no action which actually puts only one virtue into play. Likewise, the species of sins can be perfectly determined, and they cannot be confused. Yet one cannot find, if it is theoretically possible to do so, any sin actually committed where several species of sins, beginning with pride, self-love or concupiscence, do not enter in, either from the standpoint of intention, or object, or circumstances. A classic instance is that of the man who, out of resentment against a priest, steals a sacred vessel. His sin is essentially an act of hatred (from the intention), but it is also a theft (from the object) and a sacrilege (from the circumstances).

Missionary action must be formally defined. Thus it will be possible to distinguish and recognize it easily, even if it is usually found mingled, in any concrete act, with pastoral action or with catechetical action. Missionary action is that which has as its goal terminating *unbelief,* in every place wherever the latter may present itself or be concealed, by means of the Word of salvation accompanied by appropriate testimonies. Each time his ministry requires it, he who is primarily entrusted with pastoral care may therefore also be a missionary. We should have no difficulty recognizing this, since it springs

from ecclesial action, the living synthesis of all that salvation requires. No priest should neglect to acquire, therefore, against the time or moment when they may be necessary for him, the qualities of the missionary.

Fourteen

MISSIONS, CATECHESIS, AND PASTORAL ACTION IN THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH

Since missionary activity is not merely a stage in ecclesial action but also a permanent aspect of it, the missiologist cannot drop his study of the missions at the point where the nonbeliever has made an external profession of faith, or at the moment when a large Christian community has been established in a formerly nonbelieving country. Further study is necessary, since missionary action can also be joined with other activities, specifically, catechetical or pastoral activities. How can this be?

There is an initial way of understanding that the missionary effort remains within pastoral action. This consists in remembering that every pastor, because he is the faithful servant of the Pastor of pastors, must care not only for the sheep that are in his own pasture, but also for those which are called to be there, gathered into the one flock of God. No pastor can forget the nonbelievers who live within range of his church and who sometimes are themselves waiting for his call or who even may enter his church from time to time to see whether they might not be responsive to some word they might hear there.

In understanding the connection between missionary and pastoral action in this way, it is also relatively easy to distinguish between missionary action and pastoral action properly so-called. The priest, or the Catholic

Action militant, generally know whether they are dealing with a nonbeliever or a believer, with a group of atheists or a circle of fervent Christians. Their activity is normally missionary or pastoral depending on whether they are addressing themselves to one group or the other. But is the preacher always sure that there are no unbelievers in his audience? The custom of sending away the catechumens and penitents at the Offertory of the Mass has long ago ceased. And, moreover, even if the custom had remained, would the preacher be sure of having only true believers "firmly established" in their faith among the baptized souls and communicants in front of him? Are there not some who are barely believers, or who are weak in their faith, or who live in fact as if they did not believe, or who, despite their faith, which they want to keep in one part of themselves, remain pagan in the rest of themselves and live at least partially outside the Church? In the face of such a diverse world, or even merely in the face of this or that man who believes, yet is very much divided, missionary action remains useful and necessary. As we have said, it consists in recalling from time to time, with appropriate testimony, the initial message of the faith: the announcement of the salvation brought by God in Jesus Christ.

But let us go further. Is this solemn and efficacious announcement of salvation necessary only when the assembly of the believers is dotted with nonbelievers, or when the believer is himself divided between faith and doubt, in his intentions and in his life? Does it not, on the contrary, form part of the organic preaching of the Church, which needs, in order to be complete and

to remain living and efficacious, the constant and forceful reminder of this message? It is this which we would like to explain by showing that the "faith of conversion" which the missionary seeks to obtain, is found, in its own way, during the entire life of the believer. By isolating somehow, in the chemical sense of that word, the "faith of conversion," to which the missionary action corresponds, and by showing that it remains in the life of the believer, and that it must constantly be animated or sustained, we will, at every stage of the ecclesial action, be able to speak of missionary action without, however, ever confusing it with the other actions of the pastor—catechetical instruction and pastoral care—even though it may be mingled with them.

The mission and the faith of conversion

Whatever the sign by which it is expressed and by which it communicates the grace of salvation, missionary action is that which has as its goal to bring the nonbeliever to the conversion of faith. When we say "nonbeliever," we do not mean to say that the missionary never addresses himself to more than one man at a time. St. Peter, St. Paul, even Apollos, who "refuted the Jews in public" (Acts 18:28), spoke to crowds. But, regardless of the number of those who hear the Word, the latter always speaks to the heart of *each man* and demands from it adherence to the faith.

What happens when someone who did not believe now declares from the bottom of his heart, truly, "I believe"? Of course, he believes in God. But *what* exactly does he believe? Perhaps very little, practically nothing, if we measure what he believes by what he is capable

of saying and writing about it. He has not yet received instruction; perhaps he knows nothing as yet about the articles of the Credo, which are going to be communicated to him later. However, he has the essentials. He has received, if he really believes, the grace of faith; he has been converted. The rest is now a matter of instruction, of formation, and of growth in the faith.

Cornelius, the Roman centurion of the Italian cohort, believed in God. He was, as St. Luke tells us, "devout and God-fearing" (Acts 10:2). But he was not a Jew and, no doubt, still poorly instructed regarding the Scriptures. We do not even know what he knew of the Gospel. Certainly, his "servants, and a God-fearing soldier from among his personal attendants" (*id.* 10:7) were still less informed. Yet, when Peter arrived in his house, "the Holy Spirit came upon all who were listening to his message" (manifest proof, according to Peter, that they had all that was required to receive Baptism —*id.,* 10:47), and he thereupon ordered them to be baptized (*id.,* 10:48).

Likewise, what did that other Roman centurion believe, who came to beg Jesus to heal his servant (Matt. 8:6)? He was a pagan by religion, and yet he recognized in Jesus at least a prophet of God, since he had complete confidence that He could heal this servant who was paralyzed and suffering. And Jesus declared of this Roman soldier: "Amen I say to you, I have not found such great faith in Israel" (Matt. 8:10). The same is true in the case of the Syrophoenician woman, also a pagan, to whom Jesus said: "O woman, great is thy faith!" (Matt. 15:28).

This initial faith is demanded by Jesus as soon as He

begins His preaching: "Repent and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15). At its inception, it is "a movement of confidence and abandon through which man gives up trusting in his own thoughts and his own forces in order to rely on the Word and the power of Him in whom he believes."[1] Requiring a total renunciation of the self, this faith is based on humility, which is why many refuse it, demanding signs which Jesus does not give to those who are poorly disposed (cf. Matt. 27:42). Others only half believe (Mark 9:24); their faith has no roots (Luke 8:13), it is unstable. The Apostles themselves are slow to believe (Matt. 8:26; 14:31; 16:8; 17:20), even after the Resurrection (Matt. 28:17; Mark 16:11-14; Luke 24:11; 25:41). Peter, the "rock," is shaken in his faith at the moment of the Passion (Matt. 26:69-75); but his faith was to be strengthened after this trial (Luke 22:32). When it is strong, "faith works wonders"[2] (cf. Matt. 17:20; 21:21; Mark 16:17). "All things whatever you ask for in prayer, believing, you shall receive" (Matt. 21:22. Cf. 9:22). In particular, prayer obtains the forgiveness of sins (Matt. 9:2; Luke 7:50) and salvation, whose necessary foundation it is (Luke 8:12; Mark 16:16; Acts 3:16).

What then is the nature of this basic faith, or of this beginning of faith which we may call the faith of conversion?[3] It is principally a turning about of the soul, which ceases to depend on itself and confides its life completely to God. Fr. Liégé presents it as follows:

[1] Commentary on the *Bible of Jerusalem* (Cerf) on Matthew 8:10, on which we rely here.

[2] *Id.*

[3] Cf. P. A. Liégé, "Faith," in Theology Library, IV (Fides, 1957), especially pp. 3-47.

> What happens when a man becomes a believer? In a very general way it may be said that he once thought of his life as a task to complete, and believed that success depended upon himself alone. The present world was the scene of his endeavor. He had to cope with many problems which he tried to solve within the limits of the world as he knew it, deciding that a man should perhaps be satisfied with every ordinary achievement. And then one day everything was changed in the life of this man. God had intervened, and had said to him, "Your whole life is at stake, together with everything you call your life: your joy and sorrow, your loves and your relations with other men, your work and your accomplishments, your body as well as your soul, your death and all the tragedies that lead up to it. But I am the Living God and the Friend of Man, and I will give you a life that will take up and infinitely surpass your laborious existence, a life transcending death and all the limitations of your carnal condition. I will be your Master, and your whole destiny will be in My hands. You will become My obedient and faithful collaborator in the fulfillment of your destiny." And the man said, "Yes!"—not through weakness or fear—but only because God's strength and life were so much greater than his own.[4]

The faith of conversion presents itself in different ways for Abraham and for the hearers of Peter and Paul as they listened to missionary discourses of the Apostles. "Abraham in surrendering his life to God completely abandoned himself to Him, being certain that divine generosity would match his sacrifice in spite of immediate appearances. Since the word of Almighty God had promised it, it mattered little that Abraham knew nothing of the fullness of life contained in this promise. He took God's word seriously and staked his whole destiny upon this promise. He had faith in God."[5] Those who heard

[4] *Id.*, p. 3.
[5] *Id.*, p. 4.

Peter or Paul, and, with them, all Christians, wager their lives in reference to God's design manifested in Jesus Christ and proclaimed by the missionary. "For if thou confess with thy mouth," says St. Paul, "that Jesus is the Lord, and believe in thy heart that God has raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart a man believes unto justice, and with the mouth profession of faith is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:9-10). But what is common to the faith of Abraham and to the faith of the disciples of Jesus, is the commitment of the entire self; a confident adherence with one's whole life to a Word which, even though it is not yet explicit, is recognized as being from God. Everything is there.

This is why such faith effects salvation: "Having been justified therefore by faith," says St. Paul (Rom. 5:1). And the Council of Orange specifies that no one believes that justification begins only with the more informed and more developed faith which comes later:

> If anyone says that the first movement of faith and this loving gift of self which accompanies it, through which we believe in Him who justifies the sinner, and through which we then come to the regeneration of Holy Baptism, is not equal in us to the later life of faith through a gift of grace, that is, through an inspiration of the Holy Spirit which rectifies our will and leads it from unbelief to faith, from wickedness to piety, but says instead that this initial movement of faith is attributable to the power of our own nature, he gives proof thereby that he is in contradiction to the teachings of the Apostles, for the blessed Paul declares: "I am convinced of this, that he who has begun a good work in you will bring it to perfection until the day of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 1:6).

> If anyone persists in affirming that it is possible through the resources of nature alone to exercise one's reflectiveness properly, regarding any good pertaining to the salvation of eternal life or to decide to choose same; or else, also, that it is possible to receive salvation, specifically, the preaching of the Gospel, without the illumination and inspiration of the Holy Spirit whose anointing gives anyone the power to consent and to believe in the truth; that man is the plaything of the heretical spirit, since he does not grasp the Word of God recorded in the Gospel: "Without me you can do nothing" (John 15:5), nor this statement of the Apostle: "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything, as from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God" (2 Cor. 3:5).[6]

No matter how poorly defined the first movement of faith may be, no matter how fragile, perhaps, and no matter how unsure of itself when the convert wants to express what he believes in, it is nevertheless far from what theology calls "unformed faith," that is, faith without the life of faith—without love—and, therefore, without grace. Unformed faith is quite the opposite of the initial faith of the convert. That faith is all life and has still very little intellectual content beyond adherence to the Word of God recognized as such. As examples, we have the faith of the man born blind or the faith of the Samaritan woman, when they had finished speaking with Jesus. Unformed faith, on the other hand, is the intellectual residue of a "faith" somehow worn out by sin, empty of all life, all love, all interior adherence and all commitment of self that would place full confidence in Him who justifies the sinner. The other faith is first in the

[6] Second Council of Orange, in 529, Canons 5 and 7, *Denz.*, 178 and 180.

life of the believer, and is behind the development of his faith. This weaker faith comes second and presupposes the faith of conversion, already received and somewhat developed, with the sinner retaining, by a singular favor from God but in vital contradiction with himself, his belief in the divine truths learned, while refusing to give himself henceforth to God.

Conversion and the life of faith

At this point, we can see that the faith of conversion is normally present throughout the development of the faith. It is, so to speak, its soul. And this is why it must give to the faith more and more life, firmness, joy, all during the time the faith is growing and increasing its divine knowledge. But what is normal does not always happen. Man is a sinner, and while he may grow more knowledgeable about the faith, he does not necessarily become more deeply rooted in it, more penetrated by the experience of his first contact with it. Man can act in such a way that, even after living some time in the faith, he gradually rediscovers, in contradiction to his faith, the jealousy of his own ego, his love of self-security, the autonomy of his own life. This is why it is necessary for the pastor, or even the catechist, to join a typically missionary action to his own proper activity.

In saying that the pastor must also necessarily be a missionary, we are not saying that he must always address himself to his flock as to unbelievers—although there may be unbelievers listening to him. We are simply applying here what we have said about missionary action when we defined it not merely as a stage, delimited in time, of ecclesial action leading the nonbeliever to the

faith, but also as an aspect of all ecclesial action, according to which the latter has as its object and its end either to communicate the faith initially, or to awaken and stimulate it, to make it live or to renew it, to root it deeply in the mind and heart of the believer. Missionary action, then, has as its goal not only to lead the nonbeliever to the faith, but also to lead unbelief itself (which paradoxically, can keep, or recapture, certain areas in the believer) to the faith.

What means correspond to this missionary function? Those which we associated with the initial missionary action: the testimony of the Word, accompanied by the witness of an authentically holy life in communion with the brethren and the whole Church; also by the witness, not necessarily of miracles, but at least of that faith so great "as to remove mountains" (1 Cor. 13:2), and which sometimes, when the Holy Spirit inspires it, demands it, and makes it necessary, can go as far as to perform a miracle; by the witness, finally, not necessarily of martyrdom, but of the patience of Christ in putting up with opposition—whether this be calumny, contradiction, incredulity, or any sort of painful trial. "Indeed, the signs of the apostle," St. Paul tells us, "were wrought among you in all patience, in miracles and wonders and deeds of power" (2 Cor. 12:12). We can see that this Word and these witnesses can arise, and must arise, in the life of a pastor of souls.

The pastor, for instance, cannot be content that the faithful *read* the Bible, even the Gospels, though this is certainly necessary to perfect their knowledge and to aid their contemplation; but they must also *hear* the Word of God. The pastor owes it to himself to bring

this Word to them, not merely to develop their knowledge, but to increase and make more secure and more joyous their conviction of the faith, to give this conviction vigor and consistency. Each time he speaks to them, whether it be in the course of a regular sermon, or homily, or in a very practical request for some service to be rendered, if he speaks a Word animated and sustained by a profound faith and accompanied by appropriate testimonies, without any intention except to communicate his faith, the pastor is therefore *also* (though not only) doing the work of a missionary, as we have defined it.

This is not all he does, of course. There has been a tendency in the past few years to apply the concept of the "mission" loosely, reducing, in many cases, pastoral care and catechesis to missionary action alone. This happened to the detriment of each of these activities. Missionary action is only one phase and one aspect, or a particular function, of ecclesial action.

We can see now that everything involving the Word, or preaching (the "prophetic" task of the Church, in the sense in which the New Testament speaks of prophets), involves at all times, from some point of view, our object. The Word of God indeed bears in itself an invisible power "of conviction and fecundity which acts upon the heart"[7] at the same time as it is heard. Such was the case with Lydia, "a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira" (Acts 16:14), who was listening to Paul, and the Lord "touched her heart to give heed to what was being said by Paul" (*id.*) Her conversion

[7] P. A. Liégé, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

was so complete that it ended in her immediate Baptism and in that of her entire family.

The Word of God which is spoken by the preacher without artificial devices of eloquence and persuasion, is a Word uttered in the Spirit which effects through the Spirit "a demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Cor. 2:4), in order that the faith might rest "not on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God" (1 Cor. 2:5). Likewise, that which concerns witness under all its forms involves the mission, properly so-called. The Apostle is a witness. This is what Jesus calls His Apostles before sending them out on their mission: "You shall be witnesses for me" (Acts 1:8).

Now we can define missionary theology. Despite its scope, missionary theology considers everything from the particular point of view of the Word which, by acting in the Spirit, and with the support of appropriate testimony, leads to the faith of conversion by either kindling that faith, or by stimulating or strengthening it. Word, Spirit, testimony, faith, conversion,[8] these are the key words of this theology. Obviously, to be understood in their function within the Church, these words must be linked to others, namely: preaching, Church and Spouse of Christ, community of charity, baptismal community and eucharistic community, sacrament of Penance.

[8] In the full sense of this term, which signifies, on the one hand, rejection of all unbelief, all irreligion, all infidelity, and every way of life which is irreconcilable with living faith in Christ the Savior, and, on the other hand, adherence to the Truth which is Christ, and which is God.

Fifteen

THE MISSIONS AND NATIVE CULTURES

We cannot ignore the serious problem of missionary adaptation. The majority of works dealing with missionary questions today give it an honored place, and it is actually the great problem of our time.

At the beginning of this study, the fact of resistance to the Word, especially among Afro-Asian peoples, but also in certain European classes or environments, was pointed out. Are the sermons preached to these peoples, the Christian and theological culture of their very small Catholic elites, their style of prayer and devotions, "adapted" to what is good and what is the best in the tradition of these countries?

But why is it even necessary that preaching be adapted to the "soul" of the country? Why should it not, on the contrary, be the soul of the country that has to adapt itself to this unique Word? And, if adaptation is necessary, who is it that must adapt? It is the duty of the missionary, first of all, or is it not instead, and primarily, the duty of the catechist, who has the responsibility of presenting and explaining the rudiments of the faith, and of whoever has the task of developing the doctrines of faith to the baptized? We must try to answer these two questions.

Need for adaptation

The goal of the missions is, as we have said, to establish a Church which is stable and capable of perpetuating herself—not only because a eucharistic community has

been *externally* and hierarchically constituted, but also because this community will possess *internally* the solid and fruitful reality of that which is signified by the sacraments. This amounts to saying that the goal is to establish an autochthonous Church having not only her own hierarchy but also having in herself everything which the faith can animate and bring to life when it is linked with a new mentality, a new tradition, a new humanity.

As the Church develops in a given country, the power of the faith over all mankind also develops, and this power multiplies the signs of the faith in all that is human: customs, social relationships, works of imagination and sensitivity, and therefore also, works of art, literary works, behavior, human contacts and human relations in all their forms including the juridical. Thus, the testimony of faith of past generations becomes a magnificent support for the faith of future generations.

It is impossible to separate in the reality of each culture authentic signs from those which are indigenous. It is because they are authentic that the particular signs of the faith in each country are also indigenous. Every being expresses itself as it is, and it is quite likely that a Chinese Christian novel, for example, and, in general, of course, a literature of Chinese Christian conception, would bring us something quite different from what the West imagines, even with a very pure faith.

The indigenization of Christian culture is normal and necessary because it corresponds to the economy of the Incarnation. God did not send us down from heaven a sort of Koran written in some eternal and universal language; He became one of us, and one of us in the

country to which He came—an Israelite among Israelites —and in the time in which He came—a man of the first century among the men of that era. He spoke a particular language, Aramaic, and the images in His sermons were spontaneously borrowed from the rural scenes of the agricultural civilization of the Jews of those days, or from their representations of the world.

The Word of God that the missionary brings, following in Christ's footsteps, is not a *Diktat* to be imposed from the outside, or a word which takes no account of the one to whom it is addressed, a word which is not concerned with finding some response in the heart of its hearer, who has been prepared by the Spirit of God to listen. This kind of "preaching," even if it were eloquent, would be a violation of consciences.

Faith, among other things, is a mystery of alliance, and this alliance, far from destroying the freedom of him who believes, enlarges it, expands it, somehow recreates it. But, it will be said, the Word of God comes first; faith comes from hearing the Word of God. That is true. But faith also comes from the depths of our spirit, graced invisibly by God. It is the fruit of the soul inhabited by the Holy Spirit. When the righteous man, thus prepared by the Holy Spirit, hears the Word, it is as though someone were awakening in him a sense slumbering since the creation of the world. Faith combines an external contribution of truth with this divine appetite for truth and for good—and for the perfect good which is happiness.

The development of faith and the expressions of faith, then, stem from a marriage between the Word of God which is borne in some way by the preacher, and a

particular mentality, a particular form of society or humanity. There is a Bridegroom and a Bride, even if it is also true that in this case, it is the Bridegroom who, through the gift of the Spirit, communicates to the Bride her title and being as a Bride. And, since there is a Bride, this means that the latter also brings something of herself—that which the Spirit of the Father and the Son has given her to be in view of the marriage and fulfillment in Christ. This "something of herself" will vary according to the civilizations, the languages, the customs, the times, and will constitute the variety of the Church. The latter—one, yet woven through with variety, *circumdata varietate*—will, according to St. Augustine's expression, raise her tent in every place using the ropes of the country. Or, according to a less poetic image, she will everywhere construct her house with local materials. The Church is at home everywhere, in whatever part of the world she may be singing the glories of God.

"At home everywhere" means that the signs by which she expresses herself, and in which she invisibly rejoins the One Lord, are everywhere different or may be so: language, mentality, customs, art, Christian sensitivity. This variety and adaptation are normal and necessary. They stem from the fact that faith is everywhere the betrothal and consent of a free person, and from the fact that the Church everywhere is the Spouse of Christ.

Adaptation and pastoral care

The missionary Church which brings the initial message of faith accompanied by the appropriate testimony must therefore be careful to respect what a particular

people who will be the Church, the *Spouse* of Christ, in a place, can contribute. This means that the mother-Church which brings the faith must be respectful of the growth of the daughter-Church's faith. Still, the missionary must not put himself in the place of the one who will be charged with pastoral care properly so-called. He must instead seek to form native shepherds. While it is part of his role to do pastoral work to make up for the native pastors as yet unformed, he must be careful to respect the different modes of missionary and pastoral action.

Missionary action, of itself, has hardly any concern with adaptation. Its first goal is to bring about conversion and the very first movement of faith. Its method is to create a shock by the announcement of the Word, operating in the power of the Spirit, and by the witnesses of a real life of faith and a true community of believers. Catechetical instruction and pastoral care, however, must nourish the initial faith, give it growth, not only in vitality but also in knowledge. Indigenous signs of the faith—besides the seven sacramental signs—normally develop in every people, beginning with the initial faith and continuing throughout the growth of the faith. Gradually, these signs become the spontaneous expression of the faith of the people, and precisely because this expression is homogeneous both as to the Catholic faith and the native soul, they serve to transmit the culture of the faith to the neophytes.

But where and how are these signs, going to develop? It is a truism to say that there is no culture of the faith imposed from the outside. One does not impose a culture any more than one imposes a tradition. These are formed

and develop in the very place where they are to be the culture and the tradition. It is primarily the task of the native Christians, assisted, of course, but no more than assisted, by the missionaries, to form this culture and tradition. One does not make Burgundy wine in Australia or America. Even with all the necessary artifices, it is only in Burgundy that the appropriate vines find the soil, the temperatures, the slopes, which make possible the "culture" whose fruits we know so well. So too, with all their good will, European missionaries will not invent of themselves an African—or Indian, or Chinese or other—Christian culture, unless, having been so thoroughly assimilated by these areas—which is a rare, difficult, and lengthy process—they are only "inventing" what comes from their own sources.

The proper function of a Christian culture is to be a symbiosis of faith, on the one hand, and the mentality, the sensitivity—in a word, the humanity—of a certain people, on the other. No matter how adapted it may be (and this is not always necessary; a confrontation of *distinct* cultures is sometimes more fruitful than a deceiving mixture of cultural resemblances), the theology, or religious culture, of the missionaries is not transplantable as such. It is always an exported culture, somewhat artificial, not an indigenous and, therefore, authentic culture.

What is true of culture is also true of its elements, in particular vocabulary and language, to the extent that these are an expression of an indigenous culture. An example will help us understand this better: the efforts of missionaries in China to forge a Chinese Christian language and vocabulary.

In his study of Chinese Christianity Father F. Huang quotes this statement from a missionary in 1890: "The Chinese language is such a defective and ungracious instrument, that it can never be the medium of the spiritual truth of Christianity."[1] Why did the missionaries find the Chinese language "such an ungracious and defective instrument for the reception, communication, and deepening of Christianity"?[2] Because they ran into tremendous difficulties in expressing Christian ideas in Chinese. Father Huang gives us an idea of these difficulties:

> The Chinese language is monosyllabic and uninflected. This ideographic tongue, lacking the notations of number, gender, tense, and relationship, is indeed inadequate for expressing certain abstract ideas. It is difficult to translate into Chinese such terms as Trinity, transubstantiation, hypostatic, etc. For instance, let us take the idea of trinity. It is generally translated by the expression *San wei i ti,* which means "three persons in only one body"; but this neologism which stems from an effort to translate "three persons in one single substance," gives uninformed Chinese the idea that we are speaking of a pathological case of multiple personality.[3]

These ideological obstacles presented by language are not the only ones. They are sometimes made worse by the difficulty of phonetic adaptation:

> The phonetic transcription of the names of Biblical personalities and Christian saints has likewise caused difficulty. To try to transcribe phonetically in a monosyllabic language Hebrew or European names made up of several syllables,

[1] *Chinese Recorder,* 1890, p. 454, quotes by F. Huang, *op. cit.,* p. 73.
[2] F. Huang, *op. cit.,* p. 74.
[3] *Id.,* p. 74.

is to destroy the conciseness, harmony and rhythm of a Chinese phrase. It is difficult, if not impossible, to write in elegant Chinese, pleasing to the ear, a Biblical name such as *Mei-lei-Kouo-sei-dei-kouo* (Melchisedech), or a Christian name such as *Jo-wei-ai-fang-tsi-kouo* (Francis Xavier). A well-known translator of the last century used to say that it was barbaric names like those which had estranged the majority of literate Chinese from Christianity. It even takes a great deal of courage and virtue on the part of a cultivated Chinese Christian to read in phonetic transcription the genealogy of Christ at the beginning of St. Matthew's Gospel, a genealogy which risks confusing him regarding the family relationships between the ancestors of Jesus. Are *YA-po-lo-han* (Abraham) and *YA-ko-pe* (Jacob) of the same family, since both begin with the patronymic *YA?* Is it not for the same reason that one Chinese preacher claimed that Jesus was the son of Yahweh, because Yahweh (*YEI-ho-wah*) and Jesus (*YEI* son) have the same patronymic, *YEI?*[4]

Running into all these difficulties, the missionaries of a half-century ago, writes Father Huang, finished by imposing on the Chinese converts "a Christianity without any link with Chinese culture, thereby condemning them to live under the tutelage of the foreigner."[5] He continues:

It is incontestable that the Chinese language and thought presented immense difficulties for the translation and development of Christian ideas. But it is the prejudice of Western culture which inclined some missionaries to transform these inevitable difficulties into insurmountable obstacles. Having been unable to reach the learned, they contented themselves with indoctrinating the peasants, not

[4] *Id.*, pp. 75-76.
[5] *Id.*, pp. 79-80.

realizing that if the Chinese had been really captivated by Christianity, they would have forged by themselves a language and a thought capable not only of enunciating Christianity, but also of expanding it.[6]

The last proposition seems to us to be the main one: "If the Chinese had been really captivated by Christianity, they would have forged by themselves a language. . . ." By fabricating a Christian vocabulary with words expressing ideas as complex as these, which only appeared in Christianity after four or five centuries of Christian life, culture, and reflection, the missionaries, despite the immense generosity of their faith and hope, in some way overestimated their ability.[7] It was not within their power, it seems, to go that far.

But, one may say, was this possible even for the learned Chinese? Was it not that the language itself was refractory with respect to such an undertaking, and not the fact that the missionaries were not learned Chinese themselves? Here Father Huang supplies a decisive counterproof:

The introduction of modern science and technology in China raised even greater linguistic difficulties. Yet the Chinese intellectuals who were the fervent proponents of the sciences conquered all the difficulties inherent in the translation of the terminology and its phonetic transcription.

The penetration of Western ideologies into China encountered an infinitely more stubborn resistance on the

[6] *Id.*, p. 80.

[7] This reflection, it should be pointed out, is still very much to the credit of the missionaries. It is easy to criticize in retrospect. But, taken in the over-all context of missionary history, this effort was a magnificent one.

part of the traditional thinkers than that offered to Christianity. But, because some Chinese intellectuals became enthusiastic apostles for these ideologies, they not only created a vocabulary, both accurate and appropriate, for them, but also transformed Chinese thought itself.

If today China is being westernized outside all Christian influence, it is perhaps because its leaders showed themselves capable of assimilating an anti-Christian ideology of the West, while the missionaries of the nineteenth century did not permit the Chinese to show freely their own genius in a Christianity also transplanted from the West. It is to be deplored that these missionaries, so ardent and so ready for every sacrifice, did not have enough confidence in the Chinese people to prevent the Church from being excluded from this phase in the growth of China.[8]

Father Huang's analysis may be open to criticism on one point or another, but it would be pointless to raise such criticisms here. He has been quoted only for the principle which he illustrates so well, namely, that religious culture is no more capable than any other of being transplanted into another country and among another people of different mentality and tradition than those where the culture arose.

Moreover, we could multiply examples of this kind. It is admitted today that the Church has not taken root in the working class.[9] Why? Certainly not because of the generous apostles who left everything behind to penetrate this world so unknown to the majority of them, and who, to give themselves completely to the evangelization of their people, broke all their ties with their own worlds. But unquestionably there are as yet too few

[8] *Op. cit.*, p. 81.
[9] Cf. R. d'Izarny, *op. cit.*

real Christians in this working-class world who are truly of this world, who can speak its "language" (one need not be a sociologist to note that the language of the "cultured" classes is far from resembling the language of manual workers, and that among the latter it is possible to distinguish further differences in language corresponding to different networks of human relationships) who know its particular grammar, who are familiar with its images, its ideals, its feelings. The working-class culture, whether in relation to the secular world or the world of faith, is not created from the outside, and can be neither transplanted nor imposed. It can be helped, and it surely will be, by confrontation with another Christian culture, but it can arise only in a real and sufficiently representative portion of the people whose culture it is to become.

In short, the "missionary-pastor" can help in the formation of the new religious culture of the people he has evangelized. The future Christianity which is in germ will not be able to give itself a Christian culture, with all the intellectual, spiritual, artistic, and other values which that involves, without the help of the mother-Church. There will necessarily be a meeting of two cultures: the Christian culture of the mother-Church, which not only brings her faith, but also everything which the culture of faith has produced and established—Christian literature, arts, customs, social relationships, etc.—and the secular culture of the new people, which as yet offers only the disparate materials of its future religious culture. The meeting of these two cultures gives rise to the phenomenon of *acculturation,* the process by which one culture absorbs the traits of another. This is a delicate

process, although a necessary and beneficial one. It must be re-emphasized that the parent culture must assist in the development of an indigenous culture, and not supplant it.

There is therefore something that the mother-Church must above all impose (the initial *message* of the faith or the announcement of salvation which brings conversion), and something that she must also respect, while necessarily influencing it (the indigenous *culture* of the faith). What is imposed is chiefly the work of the missionary. What is cultivated with the help of the native believers, and with respect for them, is usually the work of the catechist and even more, of the one who is charged with the pastoral care of the people.

Sixteen

THE CULTIVATION OF THE FAITH

The cultivation of the faith, first in the catechumens then in the baptized, pertains primarily to catechetical instruction, and then to pastoral care as such. Still, it is not rare for the missionary to take charge of the catechetical instruction of the converts and the pastoral care of the baptized, simply because not everyone is converted on the same day, and the instruction of the first converts obviously cannot be put off. Mission theology, therefore, cannot ignore the problem of the cultivation of the faith.

It can do so even less since the missionary, by his very activity and by his manner of evangelizing, in a way creates the subsequent problem of this cultivation. The rudiments of doctrine involved in the first evangelization leave much to be developed, and the missionary, in carrying out this development, can forget that his words are not to be imposed in the same way in every place. The catechetical instruction and pastoral care which come later may become very difficult and not result in a real religious culture that is also an indigenous culture, if the mission as such neglected these nuances. We must consider, then, at least from the point of view of the cultivation of the faith, the pastoral action which follows missionary action.

The activities of the pastor involve a twofold risk: that of so influencing the cultivation of the faith that he will manage to transmit along with the faith itself a culture and tradition which are neither completely

nor necessarily linked with it; and the risk of so fearing to bring cultural influence to bear, that he will end by giving nothing but abstract truths, completely devoid of that which gave life to the missionary's own culture. We are going to consider in order these two risks or possible pitfalls.

The danger of forced imposition

The mother-Church imposes the essential message of salvation and the seven sacraments. But Christian life involves more than the sacramental signs, more than the sacramentals themselves. As it grows, the life of the Christian community gradually develops a whole range of signs; the points of origin and completion remain Baptism and the Eucharist, of course, but the signs tend to encompass all the acts of life, from the most sacred, that of offering to God the sacrifice of His own Son, to taking a meal, practicing a trade (in the spirit of Christ at Nazareth), etc.[1]

This proliferation of signs and of human, social, artistic, and juridical relationships, all impregnated with the faith, is the work of the faith animating a Christian people. The missionary may certainly guide this development, but he cannot force it in a direction where this new community is not able to follow. The actions and

[1] All of these signs, to be sure, are certainly not of equal value. Some are sacraments and have their effect *ex opere operato;* others are sacramentals; others, finally, do not have even that relative dignity and efficacity. Nevertheless, they all constitute, precisely because of this diversity of values, a whole universe of signs. Even the sacraments do not all have the same value. "If any man says that the sacraments are so similar one to the other that one cannot on any account be said to be more worthy than another, let him be anathema" (Council of Trent, *De sacramentis,* can. 3, *Denz.* 846).

customs that would thus be imposed on the community from outside would be alien to its own life. They could only be maintained artificially, and real life would go on elsewhere, with the risk of developing outside the Church signs that would freely and spontaneously express this life.

This danger is not an illusion. The late Msgr. Costantini, former Secretary of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, in a conference memorializing the founder of the Paris Foreign Mission Society, Msgr. François Pallu, had this to say about the problem:

> We founded in the Far East not the Church with its normal activities, but foreign missions, and Asia has not been converted. The Apostles and the missionaries of the sub-apostolic era founded the Church with a native clergy, and they converted the Western world.
>
> What was the method utilized by the missionaries of the apostolic age and the post-apostolic age? Are we using the same method? We use methods altogether different, which seem more perfect to us, but which the experience of four centuries has shown to be almost completely sterile.
>
> The missionaries of those early ages established the Church with the ordinary hierarchy of the country in question and utilized for the liturgy the language they found there. . . . We have tried to make the Orient pass through a foreign hierarchy and through Latin, and the Orient has not done so.
>
> In 1615, Pope Paul V, in accordance with the wish of St. Robert Bellarmine, granted China the right to use the Chinese literary language for the liturgy, which would have been based on the Latin rite. The concession was never used.
>
> This aspect of the problem, too, did not escape Msgr. Pallu. He waited until he was granted, in 1673, the same indult that had previously been given the Jesuits.

> How many missionaries have spent their lives in these regions of ancient civilization preaching the Gospel! They constitute an immense army, and, among them, there has been no lack of sanctity, of zeal, of knowledge, of favor by the political powers. But what are the results? *Et erat videre miseriam.*[2]

Among the reflections which Msgr. Costantini's ideas might suggest to us, let us merely note that he mentioned only the missions of the Latin, or Western, Catholic Church. The reason for this is simple: the Catholic missions of the Eastern Church have not been very fruitful, at least in the modern era. "Nevertheless, neither the Greeks, nor the Slavs, nor the other Orientals, while retaining a religious respect for their ancient liturgical tongues, ever went so far as to exclude new translations when the need for them arose." Pursuing this investigation over the entire life of Eastern Christianity, the Church historian today adds:

> The Russians, in this regard, have been the models. They have translated their liturgy into all the Siberian dialects, into Chinese, into Japanese, and, at least after the fall of the Empire of the Czars, into Finnish, Estonian, Lithuanian, etc.—wherever the people would not have understood Slavonic. Heirs of the old broadening principle that had granted them a liturgy in their own language, they remained open-minded as regards other tongues. The principle which was generally followed in the Russian Church with respect to the missions, and which explains their success, was, on the one hand, the use of living languages in the liturgy and in translating the Bible, and, on the other hand, the

[2] Conference published in *Osservatore Romano* on January 25, 1940. Quoted by Dom P. C. Lou Tseng-Tsiang, *Souvenirs et pensées,* Cerf, 1948, p. 107.

formation of a native clergy as rapidly as possible, to which formation was then entrusted.[3]

However, we must note, along with the author, to be fair, "that it is easier to form a native clergy which is not bound like ours to the discipline of celibacy and does not have to learn difficult languages in order to be admitted to Orders."[4]

Regardless of the practices adopted, let us remember that the individual life of a community would be almost impossible where self-expression, in the area where it is permitted and desirable, would be forbidden and opposed. But the missionary must nevertheless keep from falling into the opposite extreme which would be just as bad, if not worse. A false apostolic and intellectual generosity could, indeed, lead him to think that he should favor to the maximum all new indigenous expressions. But is he sure that the customs which he thus protects, or favors, are really expressions "of the faith," or that they are capable someday, if they are not so now, of being animated by faith? Has he tested them enough? The adaptation and naturalization which are the tasks of pastors are only possible and fruitful if they are based on an authentic conversion energetically promoted by the missionary.

The danger of purism

The pastor runs another risk in addition to that of imposing from the outside forms or styles of life that do not suit the evangelized community. This new risk

[3] O. Rousseau, "Les langues liturgiques de l'Orient et de l'Occident," in *Irenikon,* vol. XXIX, 1956, pp. 47-60, 54-55.

[4] *Id.*

consists in an exaggerated fear of unduly influencing the faithful by *committing* his faith in a particular language (his own if he is among his compatriots, a foreign one if he is the pastor of a far-off people), in formulas, expressions, particular ways of acting, minor rituals and "devotions" which, without being part and parcel of the faith, are nevertheless useful and good.

As a matter of fact, one cannot escape the necessity of resolutely committing one's faith in one's words, one's behavior,[5] in the signs one is led to give of the faith. To desire otherwise is to follow an angelism that in this area, as in others, leads nowhere. For example, is one to refuse to preach in French to French people, on the pretext that the faith is not bound to French? But it is not bound to any language, and no more so to Aramaic as such. The "purist," even if he does not go to the impossible extreme of his internal logic, is sterile. He reminds us of Péguy's phrase regarding Kantianism: "Kantianism has clean hands, but it has no hands."

The preacher must on no account be afraid to become a Greek with Greeks, a Jew with Jews, a barbarian with barbarians. Nor must he be ashamed of his own cultural heritage even though he is not to impose it wholly on strangers. When a Christian mother has her child say his prayers and makes him say the Our Father, she is not concerned with giving him a course in exegesis. She does not have to tell him that Jesus actually spoke Aramaic, and that, in saying the Our Father in English one perhaps is in part losing the original meaning, that

[5] One should read the provocative chapter, "Théologie et culture," by M. D. Chenu in *La théologie est-elle une science?* Paris, Fayard, 1957.

"evil" no doubt means, in the original tongue, first the evil one and then the world of evil, etc. *At the time one is communicating the faith*—this is the principle and we ought to write it in capital letters, it is so important—and at the time one is beginning to bring others to life, one need not fear presenting the faith in any number of garments which dress it up, particularize it, and make it familiar to those to whom it comes. The believers themselves, in the measure that they believe and that the faith has some dominion over them, will develop native expressions of faith. This is quite normal and must be accepted generously.

The formation of a critical sense

How to avoid this dilemma? Either the pastor commits himself, and, for better or for worse, establishes a connection between his faith and the garments in which he received it and tries to transmit it; or else, to avoid the connection, he hesitates to commit himself and transmits nothing. Another dilemma, which leaves one quite as perplexed, occurs when the pastor either generously tries to dress up his teaching with the images and representations familiar to the people he is evangelizing, and the connection mentioned above is nevertheless fatal —not this time for the pastor but for his hearers; or he wants nothing to do with this accommodation, and is not listened to.

In finding an answer here, let us first of all recall two laws of pastoral care. On the one hand, we must not prevent the animation of all human relations by faith. We must maintain that *it is a necessity of the faith* to animate all the institutions and ways of behavior in

human life and to permeate everything—this is unavoidable and it is good. Besides, how would we announce the Word of God, if we did not announce it with words, therefore in a certain language and with a certain syntax, a certain mentality, at a specific time different from another time, etc.? This necessity is part of the economy of the Incarnation, since the Word of God made Himself known and spoke to us in a certain man, Jesus, who chose to be of a certain country, a certain race, to live at a certain time, to speak a certain language, to share a certain religious tradition. This led Him to use certain images and not others, and so on. This is the very law of the Incarnation, which is also the law of the transmission of the faith. St. Paul adapted himself to his audience, speaking in a different way in the Agora of Athens, or to the Ephesians, or to the Corinthians. This coming down of the Word of God, this progressive assimilation to the language, the culture, the tradition, in which it was sown, is a human and divine necessity at all times and in all countries.

From another viewpoint, however, this linking of the Word with a specific culture, or a specific society, risks making the Word less flexible, less able to be communicated. Whoever receives religious instruction may not be able to distinguish between what is of faith and what is merely a garment of the faith, and may bring both to the world outside, to strangers, who may not receive any of it. They may also not hear anyone who does not speak their own language perfectly. The missionary-pastor must therefore avoid as much as possible identification of the faith with the civilization whence it issued.

We know, then, that some connection in this regard

is inevitable and salutary. But we also say that this link must be avoided as much as possible.

Above all, we must avoid saying that the faith must be able to put on and take off its cultural garments easily. Faith must not take off the necessary garment which clothes it. There is no faith *outside* of the statements of faith. How could we *think* the words of the faith, without those very words? Let us say instead, and this is extremely important, that at an advanced stage of Christian education (not in the missionary or catechetical phase, but in the subsequent period of "pastoral care"), especially at the time of the formation of future pastors, of future priests or missionaries, *discernment* must be learned—discernment between what belongs essentially to the faith as each one lives and practices it in his own country, and what belongs to the necessary garb of the faith in that same country and that same civilization.

It is not necessary, we insist, to form this discriminatory or critical sense at the outset: that is, when we are giving catechumens the *rudimenta fidei*. But it is necessary that the elite possess it, and in particular all the priests, the pastors, the bishops; that is to say, all those who are normally the *elders* in the faith. St. Thomas says that all the faithful are not bound to know all the finer points of the faith, but only the *elders* among them.[6]

When pastoral care is busy forming the elite, by educating, for instance, future priests or future catechists or Catholic Action militants, it must therefore form, little by little, in all of these, the ability to discriminate between the truth of the faith and its more or less necessary garment. This critical sense presupposes a long

[6] *Summa Theol.*, 2a, 2æ, 2, 6.

formation, a long study of the history and the documents of the magisterium, a precise knowledge of comparative liturgies, comparative literatures, the Councils, etc. But no one becomes a theologian without having begun to acquire, with the help of all these sciences, such judgment of wisdom. It is the theologian who will make it possible to set up in some way a hierarchy among theological conclusions or, more precisely, among the contents of truth which are found in these conclusions. Thus, the theologian will distinguish between the propositions of *faith,* the propositions which are *close to faith,* or *probable,* or simply certain. Conversely, he will distinguish propositions *offensive to pious ears, erroneous, temerarious,* or else *improbable,* or *less probable, close to heresy,* and finally, *heretical.*

On what basis does the theologian thus classify his conclusions? Simply according to the relative importance of the sources of help from which he draws his conclusions. Reasoning based on the Gospels is stronger and demands a more vigorous assent than reasoning based on a proposition found only in a Father of the Church, and, a fortiori, only in some little-known author. It is therefore extremely important for the theologian to know the works presented to him by the Church. These sources of theological knowledge, whence the theologian will draw his principles in order to elaborate his reasoning, are what we refer to as the "theological sources."[7] The totality of these sources constitutes the "data" of the theologian.

The Castilian Dominican Melchior Cano (1509-1560)

[7] On this subject, read the fundamental study by A. Gardeil, O.P., "Lieux théologiques" in *Dict. de théol. cath.*, vol. IX, col. 712-747.

was one of the first theologians to compile a systematic treatise of the "theological sources"; taking inspiration from the *Topics* of Aristotle, he enumerated ten—seven "true sources" and three "annexes." The true sources are, first of all, those which "contain" the revealed data: Holy Scriptures and divine and apostolic Tradition; then, the "declarative sources": the authority, or official faith of the Church, the Councils, the magisterium of the Supreme Pontiff; finally, the "probable" sources: the witnesses of Tradition (the *Sancti* [Saints] and *Patres* [Fathers]), and the interpreters of the revealed data (the Doctors of the Church, the scholastic theologians, the canon lawyers). The "annexes" are: natural reason, the authority of philosophers and jurists, the facts of history.

There has been no lack of criticism of this list and of the hierarchical arrangement of the sources. There has been particular criticism of the fact that Cano makes a distinction, on the same level, as if they were two independent and equal sources, between Sacred Scripture and Tradition. Still, the list has the merit of existing, of being based on a serious study of all the facts, and of being authoritative even down to our own day. We quote it for this reason. However, the critical sense of the theologian which is created gradually in him by the study of the sources, must also be exercised with regard to this list.

Measuring judiciously the authority of each of these sources, the theologian thus becomes capable of also measuring how much stock he should place in the conclusions which depend on them. Without denying anything that he learned in his catechism, without rejecting anything or slighting any part of the religious tradition

which comes from his own country and his own milieu, the theologian, that is, the believer who has cultivated his faith (we are speaking here of the culture of *faith;* this does not require an extensive "classical" culture) will be able to grant the suitable degree of consent to all that he finds in his tradition. He will, in the first place, be able to distinguish what is revealed and is a matter of faith, from what is not, even if the latter is "close to faith," all the more so if it is not. He will, in the second place, know why and on what basis he piously holds on to every contribution of "truth" which he has received from his own religious tradition, even if he knows for a certainty that a particular proposition is not a matter of faith, or that a particular practice is not necessary for salvation. To reject, purely and simply, even one opinion of a theologian on a matter where no consensus has been reached, as well as to place too much stock in such an opinion, is to lack a critical sense.

This education of his critical sense normally enables the believer to adhere with renewed and increased vigor to the essentials of his faith. And, because he does adhere with greater vigor to the essentials, he also adheres, with a better knowledge of the reasons, to what is less essential, because it is what is essential in the faith which makes all the rest believable and intelligible. Faith is a whole, and it often happens that the man who retains "all the rest," (the secondary expressions of the faith among which he lives with his peers) with the greatest degree of religious attachment and piety, is the man who, because he has arranged his beliefs hierarchically, adheres to the essentials with the greatest forcefulness and fervor.

It is clear how erroneous it would be to renounce our cultural and theological particularisms on the pretext of some catholic universalism. These particularisms make us realize the infirmity, or at least the weakness, of our vision so long as we are not face to face with *the* Vision; they stimulate the necessary restlessness of our faith so long as we do not truly see. "Our hearts," says St. Augustine, "are restless until they rest in Thee." All these particularisms are infinitely valuable to us if they can serve us as so many successive approximations of the Truth which, thanks to them, we try to see everywhere. Truth is catholic, which means that it is beyond our particularisms but retains from each of them what belongs to It. What would our understanding of the faith be if we had only our own ears with which to hear the Word of God? God wills that we also listen to His Word with all the ears, in the whole world, which have received the Word.

However, it would be a grave error, even more serious than the first-mentioned, to consider catholicity as a universal fragmentation of distinct particularisms, and to fail to recognize everywhere the common fund of the faith, even in its diverse expressions. The ultimate cultural achievement is to be able to rediscover unity amid the apparent diversity of its representations.

The true adversaries

The missionary, therefore, must not be afraid to have a strong theological culture from the tradition which is his own, from the place where he was born and where he studied. If he has acquired this culture he will be able to avoid the identification, so often denounced these

days, between his faith and the particular tradition in which he learned his catechism, developed his faith, and lived. He will of himself, thanks to his knowledge of the theological sources, be able to make the necessary distinctions in this regard. Since he is a missionary, or is going to be one, his first task, and the most important of all, is not to develop for himself a theology "adapted" to the country, or to the environment, to which he is going. His first task consists in communicating, with the grace of God, the message of faith in great and almost absolute purity. But this does not require that "adaptation"; on the contrary, to convert, to turn the souls of his hearers, the missionary must first of all make clear the necessary *break* between the "new life" of the person becoming converted, and the mores and pagans customs to which that person heretofore adhered. The man who is being converted must renounce Satan, the world's sin, pride and the lust of the flesh. And the same holds true for the whole people that is being converted. Adherence to Jesus Christ comes at this price. The role of the missionary is to make men feel deeply this change which Jesus Christ demands.

Respecting the role of the Spirit

When he already has a group of converts in front of him, the "missionary" is called to new tasks—catechesis and pastoral care. These tasks demand that he adapt and adjust himself to the nature of the community, because the latter is now a community of believers.

Does this mean that he must give up his own culture? He would gain nothing by this, and his audience no doubt would not gain either. And, besides, how would

he do so? On the contrary, we think that his own religious culture will be more useful to him, and more profitable to others, than the difficult assimilation of a foreign culture that would never really be a true culture for him. A certain acclimatization is necessary if he wants to understand his new disciples, but this does not eliminate the necessity for him to retain his own prior theological culture. Nothing will be more useful to the future Christion elites he is destined one day to form than this direct confrontation of their human traditions with the personal culture of their missionary-pastor. This encounter of cultures which is called, as was mentioned above, acculturation, is actually a source of fruitfulness for both traditions, on one condition, however: that the cultures "exist" side by side and that they have mutual respect for one another. This statement may be a truism, but the history of the missions shows that there is always a risk of it not being acknowledged. Indeed, it has happened quite often that the missionary has had no "culture," and has had no concern for the culture of those whom he was called to teach after having preached the Gospel to them. Under these conditions, there is no confrontation of cultures. It has also happened that there was destruction or disintegration of a native culture.

Let us not dwell on these possibilities. The proper role of the missionary-turned-pastor is, as we were saying, to teach, but to do so with all the respect due to beings inhabited by the Holy Spirit. Perhaps the Spirit of God, of whom no one knows whence He comes or whither He goes, is leading them along new paths—new, at least, to the missionary. Did not Jeremias prophesy:

"This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord: I will give my law in their bowels and I will write it in their heart: and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying: Know the Lord. For all shall know me from the least of them even to the greatest, saith the Lord" (31:33-34)? The missionary, while firmly guiding his people and keeping them from false steps, must try to understand their own growth in the Spirit, must have confidence in the Spirit as their guide. On this difficult path, nothing will be more useful to him than a solid theological culture, in order to exercise, so far as he can, his critical sense and not *impose* anything which is not necessary, while still offering the largest *sharing* possible of the riches of his own spiritual patrimony. Someday, when he will be forming the elites of this new Christianity, his critical spirit will be once again especially necessary for him, so that he may teach the art of discernment to those who are beginning to achieve a certain religious culture, and are going to become capable of teaching, in their turn, perhaps even of transmitting to those who are strangers to them, the immense riches of the inheritance they themselves have received.

In short, while the *missionary,* regardless of the time of his intervention, must proclaim, with vigor and conviction, the message of the King whose herald he is, whoever does the work of a *pastor* must, while instructing, be careful to respect the particular religious values which are beginning to germinate in the souls of the converted people once the faith has taken root in their midst. The

history of the Church during the first four centuries offers us a magnificent example of this respect for peoples, their traditions and their cultures. Unlike Islam which, at a later date, would tie itself to Arabic—despite its successes in Iran, Indonesia, and elsewhere—primitive Christianity did not tie itself to Greek. From the earliest centuries, there was a Coptic Christianity, a Syrian Christianity, a crypto-Palestinian Christianity, an Armenian Christianity, a Georgian Christianity, etc. The Holy Scriptures were translated and the liturgy celebrated in all these languages; sometimes, the Christians even created, for these purposes, an alphabet which did not yet exist, as, for example, the Coptic alphabet. In Rome, during the third and fourth centuries, the liturgy began to be celebrated in Latin. That did not prevent travelers from communicating everywhere in the same Body and the same Blood of Christ. At the end of the second century, Abercius, Bishop of Hieropolis in Phrygia, whose "inscription," discovered in 1883, is displayed in the Lateran Museum, states that on his pilgrimage to Rome, he found "brethren everywhere." The Catholic Church, because she respects the gifts of God divided among the various languages and the different nations, is therefore multicultural. The tree is judged by its fruit. The pastoral spirit of an age is judged by these magnificent fruits.

(Continued from front flap)

main always alert to its necessity, even among its own members.

A major missionary problem is "adaptation": presenting the Word in human terms acceptable to its hearers. Two extremes are to be avoided: forcing the Word on people in terms completely foreign to them and refraining from any commitment of the Word in human terms, out of an exaggerated respect for human sensibilities. A critical sense is needed which enables the missionary to distinguish between the divine and human elements in his message and leaves him unafraid to clothe the former in the garments of any culture. Missionary activity, in the final analysis, requires a strong tradition of "theological culture"—understanding of the Faith in its human setting.

Father Henry's vision of the missionary function is marked by two qualities: fidelity to the essentially spiritual nature of that function and sensitivity to the human conditions under which it must be carried out. He never identifies mere organizational activity with the spread of the Faith, nor does he recommend carrying the Faith to any world but the one we live in. Awareness of the social, economic, psychological and other forces shaping the contemporary world makes his work rich in practical implications for every aspect of the Church's life which has a bearing on missionary activity: preaching methods, catechetical techniques, seminary training, parish and diocesan organization, liturgical practice, etc. His study offers invaluable guidance at a time when the world is becoming one vast mission for the Church and every Christian is being called on to play a missionary role.

THE AUTHOR

Father A. M. Henry is a French Dominican who writes and edits for a wide range of theological publications, including the "Foi Vivante" and "Bible et Mission" series of Cerf. One of his major projects has been the general editorship of the six-volume Theology Library, published by Fides from 1954-1958.

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